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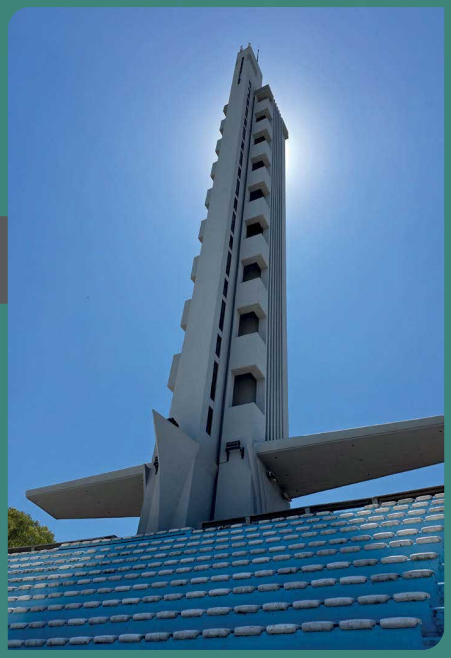

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The 2026 World Cup promises to be bigger than ever. More teams, more matches, more host countries than ever before. What began as a 13-team experiment 96 years ago is now a 48-nation extravaganza, the biggest sporting and cultural event on the planet, which literally billions of people will tune into.

How did it happen? *World Soccer* wasn't there for every single step of the way, but we witnessed a fair chunk of it.

We were there when Pele and Co. dazzled in technicolour; when Cruyff taught the world to play total football; when Maradona amazed with his feet and shocked with his hand. We were there to see Baggio's heartbreak, Ronaldo's breakthrough and Zidane's head loss. We were there for Spanish dominance, German efficiency and French mastery.

Four years ago we were there again, for Messi's crowning glory, and this year we'll be back.

Our complete guide to the 2026 World Cup finals will be in next month's issue but in the meantime, we've dived into our archives to put together this special edition, the History of the World Cup.

Jamie Evans, Managing Editor

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Where it all began

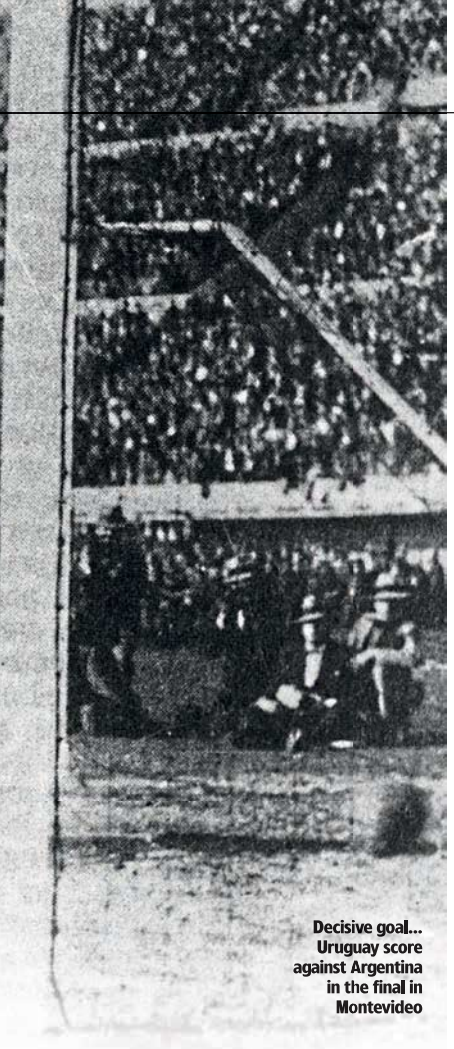
First touted back in 1902, agreed in principle in Antwerp in 1920 and passed as a resolution at FIFA's 1928 Congress, soccer's World Cup was finally launched on July 13, 1930

The first World Cup took place in 1930, hosted in Uruguay, and it has since become the world's greatest sporting event.

The trophy would be named after FIFA president Jules Rimet, its most famous founding father, and the need for a true world championship stemmed from a succession of successful Olympic tournaments in the 1920s and the irreversible onset of professionalism. It was an age of comparative innocence, and when France beat Mexico on that mid-summer Sunday in the now demolished Estadio Pocitos in the Uruguayan capital – with Frenchman Lucien Laurent scoring the World Cup's inaugural goal – history was in the making.

Hosts Uruguay seemed to have everything going their way. They had dominated the 1924 and 1928 Olympic tournaments, and had offered to pay all expenses of World Cup entrants. Sadly, the Europeans who had given birth to

Trophy award...Jules Rimet (left) hands Uruguayan FA president Dr Paul Jude (right) the World Cup trophy



Decisive goal... Uruguay score against Argentina in the final in Montevideo

the idea of a World Cup were far from enthusiastic about taking part on the far side of the Atlantic.

The home countries had deserted FIFA in 1920 and consequently the first three tournaments would be conspicuous by their absence. That split reflected a lack of communication in the world game, and thoughts of two weeks by boat either way and ten weeks away from home restricted European participation to four nations for the historic inaugural tournament.

France were bludgeoned into going by Rimet, Belgium by their persuasive FA president Rodolphe Seeldrayers. Romania competed, only thanks to the personal intervention of King Carol, who promised to make up to the players' employers (mainly British) any losses incurred while the team were away. Yugoslavia completed the quartet.

Nonetheless, Rimet's great dream was finally fulfilled and as 13 nations – split into three groups of three and one of four – set out on the road to history, the tournament was to provide a mixture of quality football, eccentric refereeing and a fine conclusion.

The South American giants, Argentina – and particularly double Olympic champions Uruguay – were favourites and after Hector Castro's goal for the latter beat Peru, four goals against Romania clinched Group 3. But the best was yet to come.

And when Luis Monti's 81st-minute goal for Argentina clinched victory over France, they too were on their way. Guillermo Stabile scored a hat-trick in the 6-3 win over Mexico and his brace in the victory against Chile secured Argentina's semi-final place.

Group 1 also had its idiosyncrasies. The referee in the Argentina v France match blew for time six minutes early, and against Mexico the side from across the River Plate got the better of five, somewhat dubious, penalty decisions awarded by Bolivian referee Ulises Saucedo.

In Group 4, European dissatisfaction continued when Belgium lost to the United States and Paraguay. Surprisingly, the latter proved no match for a North American side reinforced by six ex-British émigré professionals, who comfortably won 3-0 to win the group.

Yugoslavia, who had been so disappointing in Olympiads throughout the 1920s, gave Europe its only glimmer of respectability. Goals from forwards Aleksandar Tirnanic and Yvan Beck gave them a 2-1 victory over the fancied Brazilians, and Beck notched another two in a more comfortable four-goal hammering of Bolivia, which ensured a semi-final place.

In the semi-final against Uruguay, Djordje Vujadinovic scored a brilliant goal to give Yugoslavia an early lead.

Top goalscorer... Argentina forward Guillermo Stabile hit eight goals at the 1930 World Cup

Rimet's great dream *was finally fulfilled...the tournament was to provide* ***a mixture of quality***

But the bubble soon burst against a side passing into legend. Goals by Spanish-born forward Pedro Cea and Peregrino Anselmo changed the course of the match, and the former went on to complete his hat-trick in the second half as Uruguay, ultimately convincing, won 6-1.

Two goals apiece from Stabile and Carlos Peucelle helped Argentina to an identical scoreline against a plucky but totally outclassed USA in the other semi-final to guarantee a final between the traditionally bitter River Plate rivals who had contested the 1928 Olympic final, when Uruguay triumphed 2-1.

Surprisingly, the game was played in a reasonable spirit. Back in Buenos Aires a crowd of 30,000 gathered to listen to a commentary relayed over loudspeakers. At the Estadio Centenario, Uruguay – without injured forward Anselmo – scored after 12 minutes through Pablo Dorado but, after Peucelle first equalised following a miscued clearance by Uruguayan captain Jose Nasazzi, Argentina went ahead through a controversial Stabile goal. In the second half it required all of Uruguay's technical superiority and brilliance to turn the game, and goals from Cea, Santos Iriarte and one-armed centre-forward Castro gave them a historic triumph.

Great names like Nasazzi, Ernesto Mascheroni and Jose Andrade passed into footballing folklore and though the tournament had not been an unqualified success, Rimet's vision had laid the foundation stone for a tournament which, ultimately, developed into the most coveted crown in world sport.

Iain Macleod & Keir Radnedge

THE FINAL

July 30, 1930 – Montevideo, Attendance: 68,346

URUGUAY 4-2 ARGENTINA

Dorado 12, Cea 57, Iriarte 68, Castro 89

Team: Ballesteros – Nasazzi, Mascheroni – Andrade, Fernandez, Gestido – Dorado, Scarone, Castro, Cea, Iriarte.
Coach: Alberto Suppici

Peucelle 20, Stabile 37

Team: Botasso – Della Torre, Paternoster – J. Evaristo, Monti, Suarez – Peucelle, Varallo, Stabile, Ferreira, M. Evaristo.
Coaches: F. Olazar & J.J. Tramutola

Home advantage seals it for the Azzurri

With qualification required for the first time, the holders choosing not to defend their trophy and political machinations clearly at play, the ground-breaking second edition of the World Cup, won by hosts Italy, was a historic event

***Azzurri*...the Italian team line-up before the 1934 World Cup final at Rome's Stadio Nazionale PNF**

Whether it is a true story, or merely apocryphal, it deserves to be told here as the key to all that happened when Mussolini's Italy staged the 1934 finals.

"General Vaccaro," Mussolini is said to have addressed the head of the Olympic Committee. "Italy must win the World Cup."

"We'll do everything possible, Duce," replied Vaccaro.

"General," repeated Mussolini. "I don't think you quite understood me. I said Italy must win the World Cup."

And Italy did just that – with the aid of three Argentinians: midfielder Luis Monti, and wingers Enrique Guaita and Raimundo Orsi. Their team was based on Juventus, but they also had at their head one of the greatest of managers in Vittorio Pozzo.

Pozzo was the first manager to think deeply about how to bring the best out of his players by understanding them as men. If two players had scrapped in a league match he would put them together as room-mates when the Italian team went into *retiro*.

At the start of the finals he dropped Gianpiero Combi, the experienced goalkeeper who had been first choice for almost a decade. He preferred the younger Carlo Ceresoli. But in a training accident, Ceresoli broke a finger. Pozzo went up to Combi, and said simply: "Are you ready? I need you." Combi, unlike many players today, had refused to sulk and stepped straight back into the team.

The finals were played on a knockout basis and Italy were fortunate in that Uruguay, angry at the European semi-boycott of 1930, stayed at home – the only title holders in history not to defend the trophy – and also that Argentina,

fearful of losing any more players to the big Italian sides and the lure of the lire, sent a weakened team.

This was the first World Cup in which teams had to qualify to take part – 16 survivors remained from an initial entry of 32 nations – and the tournament was played across eight Italian cities. Any innocence from the inaugural edition was fast disappearing, and the political machinations of the Fascist era gave a glimpse of the sporting future.

The 1930s may have been decadent, but they were also a golden era for European football – an age of legends. And two great European visionaries, the aforementioned Pozzo and Hugo Meisl of Austria, had the immortals of the generation at their disposal. The *Azzurri*, with Mussolini watching every match, easily beat the United States 7-1 with Angelo Schiavio scoring a hat-trick. Understrength Argentina succumbed, sadly, 3-2 to Sweden, and they weren't the only South Americans to make the long journey for just one game. Brazil lost 3-1 to Spain after Waldemar de Brito, later the man who discovered Pele, missed a penalty. Elsewhere, an Edmund Conen hat-trick was instrumental as Germany thrashed Belgium 5-2.

Switzerland scraped through against the Netherlands and joined a quarter-finals line-up including the great disciples of the famed central European school of football – Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria – the latter known as the "*Wunderteam*".

But Austria struggled and beat France only 3-2 in the round of 16 despite the presence of greats such as Matthias Sindelar – "The Man of Paper" – Josef Smistik and Karl Zischek. Then, sadly, their classic quarter-final confrontation with neighbours Hungary, in Bologna, degenerated into a thoroughly unsavoury brawl. Hungary's Imre Markos received his marching orders and Gyorgy Sarosi's late penalty proved inadequate as goals from Johann Horvath and Zischek got Austria through.

Karl Hohmann scored twice for Germany against Sweden to ensure their semi-final place and, in the outstanding tie of the quarter-finals, Czechoslovakia beat Switzerland 3-2.

Switzerland played well above themselves, but found Frantisek Planicka splendidly acrobatic in goal. Though they went ahead early on and then pulled back the Czechs with 12 minutes to go, when the great Bohemian, Oldrich Nejedly scored in the 82nd minute, the Swiss had nothing left in reserve.

In Florence, the remaining quarter-final tie reflected the tournament's underlying tone as Italy and Spain literally fought out a 1-1 draw, with Spanish goalkeeper, the great Ricardo Zamora, heroic. It was a horrendous match, badly refereed, and typified the Italian mania to win the trophy. When they replayed the following day, the physical violence had cost Spain the use of seven players – including Zamora, who had been so badly knocked about by the desperate Italian forwards – and Italy of three. The refereeing got even worse and after two dreadful encounters, Giuseppe Meazza's goal which got Italy through seemed insignificant.

The greatly anticipated semi-final between Austria and Italy in Milan was contested in a mud bath which stifled the superbly-honed close skills of the Austrians. The *Wunderteam* had beaten Italy 4-2 in Turin in the spring, but they proved a little too fragile here. They disappointed throughout the tournament and when Guaita scored for Italy in the first half, it signalled the end of a golden era. As Pozzo said: "They are better footballers, but we are the stronger men."

In the final, Italy faced a rapidly improving Czech side, who, with Nejedly inspired, were far too good for Germany's workmanlike side in the other semi-final – a hat-trick his contribution in a 3-1 win. As hundreds of Czechs spilled across the Alps, the final proved a splendid affair. With their neat, short-passing game, Czechoslovakia played superbly and having had the better of a close first half, seemed on their way when Antonin Puc scored in the 71st minute.

But the *Azzurri*, with so much to lose, were far from finished. As Schiavio and Guaita stepped up a gear, so did Italy, to save the day seven minutes from the end when Orsi's fluke of a curling shot evaded Planicka to send the game into extra-time.

In the final reckoning, superior Italian fitness proved decisive and Meazza and Guaita combined to set up Schiavio's winner for a host nation which, distastefully, had utilised home advantage to the greatest possible effect.

Iain Macleod & Keir Radnedge

ABOVE: Underwhelming ...Austria's famed *Wunderteam* failed to live up to their massive potential

TOP: World champions...Italy coach Pozzo is held aloft by his victorious players

THE FINAL

June 10, 1934 – Rome, Attendance: 55,000 *After Extra-Time*

ITALY 2-1 CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Orsi 81, Schiavio 95

Team: Combi – Monzeglio, Allemandi – Ferraris, Monti, Bertolini – Guaita, Meazza, Schiavio, Ferrari, Orsi.
Coach: Vittorio Pozzo

Puc 71

Team: Planicka – Ctyroky, Zenisek – Krcil, Cambal, Kostalek – Puc, Nejedly, Sobotka, Svoboda, Junek.
Coach: Karel Petru

1934
World Champions
ITALY

Italy retain their crown

Azzurri coach Vittorio Pozzo ensured his place amongst the game's immortals after sealing back-to-back World Cup triumphs with an arguably even better Italian side in 1938

France hosted the 1938 tournament, but the storm clouds of war hung over Europe with impending doom; Spain was already firmly in the grip of civil war. The German military machine had annexed Austria – and nine of its World Cup squad – with the Austrians having to withdraw. Argentina would not compete and Uruguay remained absent. But Vittorio Pozzo brought a much changed and arguably better *Azzurri* side; inside-forwards Giuseppe Meazza and Giovanni Ferrari, and right-back Eraldo Monzeglio (though the latter was omitted after the first game) only retained from 1934.

Holders Italy began against Norway in Marseille, but after Pietro Ferraris' early goal they found themselves run ragged by a Norwegian strikeforce that caused many problems. It was only through the agility and bravery of Aldo Olivieri, who by now had usurped Carlo Ceresoli as the replacement for the retired Gianpiero Combi in the Italian goal, that the Scandinavians were thwarted. Arne Brustad equalised, had one chalked-off and, as the match went into extra-time, it required a Silvio Piola goal to ease Italian anxiety.

With Oldrich Nejedly and Frantisek Planicka still prevalent, Czechoslovakia beat Netherlands 3-0, whilst Hungary, again led by the legendary Gyorgy Sarosi, hammered six past Indonesia (then known as the Dutch East Indies) – with Sarosi himself and Gyula Zsengeller scoring two goals apiece.

France comfortably beat Belgium 3-1, and Cuba, having held Romania to a 3-3 draw, then created the upset of the round with a 2-1 win in the replay. But the most remarkable match was in Strasbourg; Poland and Brazil providing an 11-goal extravaganza, and highlighted were two immortal centre-forwards – Poland's Ernst Wilimowski of the old world and Brazil's Leonidas of the new.

Before Pele, Leonidas da Silva – to give him his full name – was the original "Black Diamond" – and the man who put Brazil on the World Cup map. He had been smothered in the Brazilian team beaten in the first round in 1934. But he returned in 1938 as the most outstanding South American footballer of his time. And he started the tournament with an extraordinary goal in an extraordinary match.

Despite four brilliant goals from

Double world champions...coach Vittorio Pozzo with his successful Italy team

ABOVE: Captains... Giuseppe Meazza (left) and Gyorgy Sarosi (right) shake hands ahead of the World Cup final

ABOVE LEFT: "Black Diamond" ...Leonidas scored twice in the third place play-off as Brazil beat Sweden 4-2

Wilimowski, Poland lost 6-5 to the Brazilians in extra-time – and Leonidas scored one of those goals with only one boot. As the other boot came off in the clawing mud, so a colleague put a pass clear through the Polish defence. Leonidas raced on to it, beat one defender then shot past the keeper.

In Paris, Andre Abegglen's equaliser in a 1-1 draw gave Switzerland a second chance against Germany. German boss Sepp Herberger pulled in six new faces for the replay – including the talented Fritz Szepan – and led 2-0. The Swiss, however, were not discouraged and after quick retorts from Eugen Walaschek and Alfred Bickel shattered German confidence, the gifted Abegglen scored twice late on to seal a quite stunning 4-2 victory.

Three changes in personnel for their crunch quarter-final tie against France – full-back Alfredo Foni for Monzeglio and, crucially, wingers Gino Colaussi and Amedeo Biavati (who popularised the "over the ball feint stepover") for Ferraris and Piero Pasinati – restored Italy's killer instinct. Piola, a physical, old-fashioned centre-forward who had been chosen as Angelo Schiavio's replacement as the team's spearhead for these finals, dovetailed beautifully with the new fleet-footed wingers, and his two second-half goals ended the challenge of the host nation.

Hat-tricks for Gustav Wetterstrom and Harry Andersson enabled Sweden to overwhelm Cuba 8-0 and, in Lille, further goals for Sarosi and Zsengeller for the artistic and technically superior Hungarians finished off the tired Swiss.

Sadly the remaining match between Brazil and Czechoslovakia, inaugurating Bordeaux's brand-new stadium, would pass into infamy after a vicious battle. Planicka – with a broken arm – and Nejedly – a broken leg – shortly after equalising for the Czechs, finished up in hospital: two Brazilians and a Czech were sent off. From the original 22 players, only eight contested the less volatile replay (six Czechs and two Brazilians). But despite taking an early lead through Vlastimil Kopecky, who then departed injured, Czech endurance snapped and goals from Leonidas and Roberto ended the hopes of a gifted generation of footballers. The Czechs' chances of making up for their 1934 final defeat were over.

The two-leg tussle with the Czechs proved too much for the Brazilians. Some 48 hours later they had to face Italy in Marseille. Unlike in 1934, this time the referees and the crowds were not on their side. But a little luck was. They had four days' rest before the semi-final. The Brazilians had barely two, and one of those was spent in a tiresome journey from Bordeaux to Marseille. The story goes that Brazil were so confident of reaching the final that they rested Leonidas. In fact, the long bus trip aggravated an old injury and he just wasn't fit enough.

Slack Magyar marking allowed ***Meazza and his majestic artistry*** *to turn the game*

The holders' game-by-game improvement continued and early goals from Colaussi and Meazza proved adequate to earn Italy a 2-1 win and a place in the final against the rampantly elegant Hungarians, Zsengeller's double instrumental in the 5-1 dismantling of Sweden.

In the final, the clash of contrasting styles between the fast, powerful Italians and the graceful, gifted Hungarian outfit did not disappoint. Colaussi scored for Italy after only six minutes, but though Pal Titkos levelled matters within 60 seconds, slack Magyar marking allowed Meazza and his majestic artistry to turn the game.

Meazza set up two goalscoring opportunities, gratefully accepted, initially by Piola, then by Colaussi to score again. Though Sarosi's goal after the interval briefly offered hope – one of the only times he had got the better of his man-marker Michele Andreolo – Hungary could find no further chinks in the Italian armour and another from Piola late on sealed a second successive *Azzurri* triumph.

For coach Pozzo, recapturing the trophy with a notably more attractive side sealed his place with the game's immortals. But 1938 would be Pozzo's final triumph and as German tanks rolled across Europe, the inevitable conflict of war engulfed the world for six, long dark years.

Iain Macleod & Keir Radnedge

THE FINAL

June 19, 1938 – Paris, Attendance: 45,000

Italy 4-2 Hungary

Colaussi 6, 35, Piola 16, 82

Team: Olivieri – Foni, Rava – Serantoni, Andreolo, Locatelli – Biavati, Meazza, Piola, Ferrari, Colaussi. **Coach:** Vittorio Pozzo

Titkos 8, Sarosi 70

Team: Szabo – Polgar, Biro – Lazar, Szucs, Szalay – Titkos, Zsengeller, Sarosi, Vincze, Sas. **Manager:** K. Dietz **Coach:** A. Schaffer

1938
World Champions
ITALY

Blame it on Rio

The extraordinary tournament in Brazil, decided by a thriller that wasn't even a real final, was plagued by withdrawals ahead of the first post-war World Cup

Equaliser...Uruguay's Schiaffino makes it 1-1 in the World Cup final

Post-war, nations needed time to reorganise and it was 1950 before the World Cup took shape again. Brazil, with a new, showpiece 200,000-capacity stadium in Rio de Janeiro – the Maracana – hosted the tournament and took the first steps towards immortality.

It was a strange tournament. Although Uruguay returned to the fold – back for the first time since winning the trophy in 1930 – Germany had not been re-admitted to FIFA, Argentina (at odds with their Brazilian counterparts), sullenly refused to participate, and the great central European powers of the pre-war era were all missing. Austria in particular stood out because they alleged their side was too young, but by 1951 they had one of the most attractive teams in Europe. Hungary, preparing soon to astonish the world of football, lurked behind the Iron Curtain, as did Czechoslovakia.

England – the British associations having re-joined FIFA – entered for the first time, but the vastness of Brazil caused numerous late withdrawals, such as that of Scotland, which played havoc with the organisation. The tournament reverted to a group format; the four winners contesting the final stages on a similar basis. Indeed, knockout football was eliminated altogether.

The withdrawals meant uneven groups and 13 teams instead of 16. Only Uruguay and Bolivia contested Group 4 – France withdrawing almost at the last moment. And this after actually being granted a reprieve since they had been eliminated in qualifying by Yugoslavia but invited to take part after the withdrawal of Turkey. Uruguay and Bolivia themselves had qualified by default after the withdrawals of Argentina, Ecuador and Peru, and the former hit four goals in each half, with the majestic inside-forward Juan Alberto Schiaffino scoring a brace and centre-forward Oscar Miguez hitting a hat-trick.

Holders Italy faced Sweden and Paraguay in Group 3, and though they beat the South Americans 2-0 it was too late – the title and Vittorio Pozzo were long gone: it was the end of an era.

Little more than a year before, it had seemed the Italians would present a stern defence of their title with a fine team based on Torino. But in May 1949, returning from a friendly in Lisbon, the plane crashed and the Torino first team were killed. Italy lost ten internationals, the backbone of their team. The horrific Superga air disaster left such a mark on Aldo Bardelli, the journalist made coach, that he and his players refused to fly. So Italy arrived by boat, a protracted journey that gave Bardelli and Ferruccio Novo,

the president of Torino and the *Commissario Tecnico*, time to squabble. Eventually Bardelli was sidelined.

The task, and Sweden, proved too much for the Italians. Two goals by Hasse Jeppson, who dominated distinguished *Azzurri* centre-back Carlo Parola, helped the Scandinavians to a 3-2 victory in Sao Paulo that did not fully reflect their superiority. Though they only drew 2-2 with Paraguay, it secured a place in the final round. The Swedes had performed remarkably considering their best players had been whisked away to Italy and Spain after the 1948 Olympics.

But that surprise proved minor when compared with the shock that occurred in Group 2. England, with goals from Stan Mortensen and Wilf Mannion, had opened brightly enough with victory against Chile: what followed, however, was truly astonishing. As the players left a bumpy pitch after playing against the United States in Belo Horizonte, the memory of the humiliating 1-0 defeat would haunt English football forever. A team containing such greats as Billy Wright and Tom Finney had been humbled by a 38th-minute goal by Joe Gaetjens. English football's salient player of the time, the greatest and most elusive of outside-rights Stanley Matthews, had been left out, saved for supposedly tougher opponents later down the line.

It stunned the sporting world and remains, perhaps, the biggest upset in the long history of international football. The USA team was essentially a job lot of players. Ed McIlvenny, the right-half and captain, was a Scot who had been given a free transfer by Wrexham of the Third Division North; Joe Maca the full-back, was a Belgian; and Gaetjens, the centre-forward who scored the sensational winning goal, was Haitian. Yet there was native-born talent in the team, not least in the clever left-wing pair of John and Ed Souza, from Fall River, a largely Portuguese enclave that had been sticking to soccer for many years.

When England, deflated, faced Spain, buoyant after victories over the USA and Chile, it was no great surprise when Athletic Club great Telmo Zarra scored to ensure Spanish victory and the group. This time, Matthews did play, but Jackie Milburn's headed "goal" was ruled out and England were on their way home.

In Group 1, in the form of Jair, Zizinho and Ademir, Brazil boasted a marvellous inside-forward trio, and they inaugurated the tournament in Rio de Janeiro with a comprehensive 4-0 win against Mexico. Brazil had prepared meticulously, almost monastically, under the intense aegis of their manager Flavio Costa for the tournament, and the opening game had clearly bore the fruits of that labour.

Then they moved to Sao Paulo, where a weakened team – to permit the inclusion of local players – found Switzerland a tougher proposition, the teams drawing 2-2. The point dropped could have been crucial, for Yugoslavia had beaten Switzerland 3-0 and Mexico 4-1. On their return to Rio, Brazil had to beat Yugoslavia, and a pre-match accident to Yugoslav inside-right Rajko Mitic, cutting his head open on an exposed girder, proved significant. Having to be bandaged, he missed the kick-off, and Ademir scored after only four minutes with Zizinho's header after the interval the icing on the cake.

The final group stage provided some scintillating samba-style football – and a twist in the tale. Ademir, superb and unstoppable, scored four in a magical Brazilian display against Sweden in Rio, 7-1 the final outcome. When Spain played in Rio, the magic continued unabated and the hosts hit them for six, with Ademir, Zizinho and Jair, now playing with irresistible pace, brilliance and thrust, all on the score sheet.

Despite that heavy loss, the Spanish very nearly ruined it all for Uruguay. In Sao Paulo in their opening second-round game, they led 2-1 at half-time, and only a late goal from Uruguayan skipper and centre-half Obdulio Varela saved the day. It was because of that draw that, when Brazil and Uruguay met in the last match – the *de facto* final – the Brazilians needed only to draw to win the World Cup.

A hugely partisan world-record attendance of 173,850 crammed into the Maracana to witness the seemingly inevitable coronation...but it was not to be. It was a glorious game, refereed impeccably by Englishman George Reader, with Uruguay initially holding out gallantly and resiliently against wave upon wave of Brazilian attacks pounding unsuccessfully against their defence.

Roque Maspoli was phenomenal in goal and Victor Rodriguez Andrade, nephew of 1930 World Cup winner Jose Leandro Andrade, was resolute in defence – a back line superbly marshalled by magisterial captain Varela. Yet when Friaca finally breached it just after the interval, the carnival began and Brazil, it appeared, were on the victory road.

But the immortal Varela had other ideas, pushing forward to instigate the wonderfully-elusive Schiaffino's equaliser. He continued to inspire and now bestrode the field – a giant in every sense – and 11 minutes from the end the celebration turned to mourning. Right-winger Alcides Ghiggia played a quick one-two with Julio Perez and, as Barbosa in goal waited for the cross, Ghiggia smashed the ball between the keeper and the near post. Uruguay had done it again.

Iain Macleod, Keir Radnedge & Brian Glanville

*In the form of **Jair, Zizinho and Ademir**, Brazil boasted a marvellous **inside-forward trio***

ABOVE: International football's biggest upset...England captain Billy Wright and USA skipper Ed McIlvenny exchange souvenirs

TOP: Maracana... the huge support behind Ademir as Brazil thrash Sweden 7-1 in Rio

THE FINAL

July 16, 1950 – Rio de Janeiro, Attendance: 173,850

URUGUAY 2-1 BRAZIL

Schiaffino 66, Ghiggia 79

Team: Maspoli – M. Gonzalez, Tejera – Gambetta, Varela, Rodriguez Andrade – Ghiggia, Perez, Miguez, Schiaffino, Moran.
Coach: Juan Lopez Fontana

Friaca 47

Team: Barbosa – Augusto, Juvenal – Bauer, Danilo, Bigode – Friaca, Zizinho, Ademir, Jair, Chico.
Coach: Flavio Costa

1950
World Champions
URUGUAY

West Germany stun Magical Magyars

Everything leading up to the fifth World Cup had pointed to a Hungarian triumph, but West Germany had other ideas

The 1954 finals came to the land of clocks, cowbells and Alps. And though Switzerland's World Cup was not the best organised in history, it has valid claims on being one of the best.

The 1950s was one of European soccer's greatest eras and Hungary – arguably the finest-ever international side – arrived in Switzerland as the hottest favourites the tournament has ever known. In fact, Hungary were more than favourites. They appeared stone cold certainties. Unbeaten in four years, Olympic champions, the team who had ended England's resistance at home by 6-3, and then, just to rub it in, won 7-1 in Budapest...this was the team of all the talents, one of the greatest of all time. And they were recognised as such at the time. It seemed impossible that they should fail where a Hungarian team had failed in 1938 – at the last stage. But fail they did, and in incredible circumstances.

Once more the format was altered. Sixteen nations were divided into four groups, though curiously, the two seeded nations in each group did not have to play each other. Yugoslavia, regarded as the second favourites, opened the tournament, with Milos Milutinovic's goal beating France in Lausanne. Then, a 1-1 draw with a Didi-inspired Brazil ensured qualification for both, the Brazilians having beaten Mexico 5-0.

In Group 2, Hungary, irrepressible, beat South Korea 9-0, a Sandor Kocsis hat-trick being followed by another four against West Germany. It was this odd arrangement of only playing two of the teams in your group that West Germany coach Sepp Herberger took advantage of. The Germans, back in the FIFA fold now, deliberately fielded a weakened side against the Hungarians and lost 8-3. But they still qualified thanks to first a 4-1 win and then a 7-2 play-off victory over Turkey. But one more benefit from that 8-3 thrashing: a late tackle by centre-half Werner Liebrich that crippled Hungary captain Ferenc Puskas.

The injury to Puskas would be a bitter blow. Puskas, years later, recalled: "At that time we couldn't even go out in the street. Everyone would recognise and want to talk to us. No one spoke about anything except the World Cup. I suppose all the success went to our heads a little. When we went to Switzerland we believed we were unbeatable. That cost us very dearly."

With West Germany plotting every step, Brazil flexing their muscles and

Shock success... the West Germans celebrate their win against Hungary

Uruguay desperate to retain their title, the Hungarians had a lot to beat.

Uruguay's defence of the trophy indeed began with a hard-fought 2-0 win over Czechoslovakia in the Berne mud, but they positively sparkled in Basel against a poor Scottish side that conceded seven in the broiling heat – Carlos Borges bagging a brilliant hat-trick. Austria's fine team, consisting of legendary figures such as Ernst Ocwirk and Gerhard Hanappi, also qualified, beating Scotland and Czechoslovakia without conceding a single goal and striker Erich Probst notching four across both games.

In Group 4, England's ageing side of many famous names threw away a 3-1 lead against Belgium in Basel, drawing 4-4. They clinched the group three days later by beating hosts Switzerland 2-0. In Lausanne, an Italian side that had lost heart, also lost to Switzerland – a match more notable for its generous ration of fouls. At the end, Italian players chased Brazilian referee Mario Vianna off the field. A resounding 4-1 victory against Belgium earned the *Azzurri* a play-off, but again they failed to match the exuberance of the host nation, who, in a better match, won 4-1.

As the tournament reached the knockout stages, it rained goals; West Germany, without injury problems and without too much upset, surprised fancied Yugoslavia 2-0, the tamest of the quarter-final ties.

Goalkeeper Gil Merrick's poor performance in Basel gave England numerous problems against an understrength Uruguayan side, who also lost Obdulio Varela during the game. Consequently the holders' 4-2 win said much for their character, with goals by Borges, Varela, Juan Alberto Schiaffino and Javier Ambrois trumping Nat Lofthouse and Tom Finney's strikes.

In Lausanne, on a steamingly hot day, old Alpine rivals Austria and Switzerland provided a 12-goal classic in one of history's great matches. With Roger Vonlanthen superb, Switzerland soon led 3-0 thanks to Robert Ballaman and a Josef Hugi double, but the classical Austrians, inspired by the gifted Ocwirk and some phenomenal shooting, scored three in as many minutes, adding two more before the interval. Theodor Wagner completed his hat-trick in the second half and Austria finally won a legendary encounter 7-5, Hugi also completing his hat-trick for the losers.

Sadly, Brazil and Hungary presented football's uglier face as the notorious "Battle of Berne", played in heavy rain, degenerated into the Mundial's most sordid episode. Hungary scored twice early on, after which Brazilian intimidation and Magyar retaliation caused an on-running brawl. The Europeans eventually won 4-2, chief statistics being four cautions and early baths for two Brazilians and a Hungarian. And after the match was over, the battle continued in the dressing rooms.

Surprisingly, Austria collapsed in their semi-final in Basel, losing 6-1 against an improving West Germany side for whom Fritz Walter was a colossus. But all the attention focused on Lausanne, where Hungary and Uruguay produced a rich, six-goal feast, regarded by many as the finest match ever played.

The Magyars led through Zoltan Czibor at half-time, and shortly afterwards Nandor Hidegkuti made it 2-0. They held out until late on before Schiaffino twice put Juan Hohberg through to level matters. The feast continued into extra-time and though Hohberg hit the post, the glory was to be Hungary's when Sandor Kocsis scored two glorious headers.

Despite West Germany's semi-final heroics against Austria, Hungary were still clear favourites for the final in Berne. But then manager Gusztav Sebes made two controversial changes. He decided to bring back Puskas, who claimed he was now fit again, and dropped regular right-winger Lazslo Budai, switching Czibor from the left.

At first it seemed they had been masterstrokes when Hungary went 2-0 up inside eight minutes. First a half-fit Puskas snapped up a rebound, then a terrible muddle between Werner Kohlmeyer and goalkeeper Toni Turek presented Czibor with the second.

ABOVE: West Germany XI...the players line-up ahead of their 6-1 semi-final victory against Austria

TOP: First goal... Max Morlock gets West Germany back in the game in the final

The Hungarians had to start again. But Puskas was clearly not match fit. As he started to labour, so did Hungary. The Germans sensed victory and after Turek made some brilliant saves at one end, the inspired Walter set up Rahn to hammer in what proved the winner.

Hungary fought back bravely and Puskas scored apparently, but referee Bill Ling ruled him offside. Hungary's luck had run out – in the worst possible way, and on the worst possible day. "We'd sweated blood beating Uruguay and Brazil," said Puskas. "And all for this." Shocked beyond disbelief, they had been denied the coronation that should, rightfully, have been theirs.

Iain Macleod & Keir Radnedge

A late tackle by Werner Liebrich ***crippled Hungary's Ferenc Puskas****...it would be a bitter blow*

All over? Not a bit of it. Just three minutes later, Jozsef Bozsik miscued a clearance and West Germany's Max Morlock struck the ball past Gyula Grosics. And after a few more minutes they pulled level, Helmut Rahn hitting in a corner from skipper Fritz Walter.

THE FINAL

July 4, 1954 – Berne, Attendance: 62,500

WEST GERMANY 3-2 HUNGARY

Morlock 10, Rahn 18, 84

Team: Turek – Posipal, Liebrich, Kohlmeyer – Eckel, Mai – Rahn, Morlock, O. Walter, F. Walter, Schafer.
Coach: Sepp Herberger

Puskas 6, Czibor 8

Team: Grosics – Buzanszky, Lorant, Lantos – Bozsik, Zakarias – Czibor, Kocsis, Hidegkuti, Puskas, M. Toth.
Coach: Gusztav Sebes

1954
World Champions
WEST GERMANY

The **nearly men**

Hungary were undoubtedly the best team of the early 1950s but the "Magical Magyars" narrowly failed to win the World Cup that they richly deserved. By Brian Glanville

"All political careers end in failure," is a well-known saying, and one might say much the same about football. The brilliant, almost all-conquering Hungarians of the 1950s are a case in point. They were unbeaten for four coruscating years as they went into the 1954 World Cup in Switzerland and there appeared to be no team that could resist them. But in the final in Berne, the West Germany side whom the Magyars had annihilated 8-3 early in the tournament bested them 3-2.

With hindsight, it could be argued that the Hungarians had been cheated. Ferenc Puskas, Hungary's dynamic captain and inside-left, who arguably should not have been allowed to talk his way back into his team that day, equally arguably had a perfectly good equalising goal disallowed for offside.

Be that as it may, it is West Germany's name not Hungary's that is to be found on the World Cup. Two years later came the gallant but doomed uprising in Budapest, whereby, you might say, the Hungarian authorities were hoist with their own petard. For years past, they had ruthlessly herded the nation's star players into a synthetic army team, named Honved. And the crushed rising prompted Puskas and fellow national team stars Sandor Kocsis and Zoltan Czibor to leave the country, eventually all ending up in Spain.

MATCH OF THE CENTURY

Soon after Hungary had thrashed England 6-3 at Wembley in November 1953, not least thanks to the inept tactics of the hosts' coach, Walter Winterbottom, a book appeared in England called *Learn To Play The Hungarian Way.*

What became clear was that the old wisdom of football could not be denied. Great teams occurred when a bunch of great players emerged together; and the Hungarians in their prime were indeed a great team. George Raynor, the little Yorkshireman who took his depleted Sweden team to Budapest a fortnight before the England game at Wembley and forced a 2-2 draw, told me he reckoned the Hungarians were a better side than the Brazilian one that beat his Sweden 7-1 in the 1950 World Cup, because the Brazilians had the advantage of playing in thinner air.

Unlike Winterbottom, who duly identified inspirational forward Nandor Hidegkuti as Hungary's fulcrum but did nothing valid about it, Raynor had him man-marked by a different forward in each half and rendered him largely innocuous. By contrast, Winterbottom

Magical Magyars... Hungary pose for a team photo in the early 1950s

asked centre-half Harry Johnston whether he would prefer to stand off Hidegkuti or play on him. Johnston replied that he would prefer to stay back. Fair enough, had Winterbottom then marked Hidegkuti with a midfield player, but he didn't. So Hidegkuti put Hungary ahead in 90 seconds and went on to score a hat-trick.

IRRESISTIBLE PUSKAS

Puskas was irresistible. There was a famous moment when, with the "Galloping Major" in possession near the England goal, Billy Wright rushed past him "like a fire engine going to the wrong fire", in the words of Geoffrey Green in *The Times*. Puskas simply pulled the ball back with the sole of a boot before striking it past Gil Merrick, the fallible England keeper.

The word is that in the dressing room before the game, the Hungarian team, who had approached the match with some trepidation, were given a long tactical lecture by Gusztav Sebes, the government minister in overall charge of the side, after which Puskas told them to forget it all and gave his own team talk instead.

He was certainly the prime influence. Gyula Mandi, a former international with modern training ideas, was the manager, but reportedly had far less influence. This was clearly to be seen in Switzerland the following year when Puskas, kicked by centre-half Werner Liebrich in the first game against the Germans, and out injured thereafter, insisted he play in the final.

I had seen Hungary waltz past Italy 3-0 at the inauguration of the Olympic stadium in Rome in May 1953. Tremendously impressed by them, I had written at the time that England – till then, of course, still unbeaten at home by any foreign team – should beware when they met the Hungarians in November.

Writing in 1955 in my book *Soccer Nemesis*, I said: "Tactically, the Hungarians based their play upon attack, often using their right-half, [Jozsef] Bozsik, as a sixth forward and their centre-forward, generally Hidegkuti, as their chief engineer, withdrawn behind the rest of the attack. The forwards, however, constantly interchanged position, and Hidegkuti himself was as likely to appear in the penalty area, as spearhead, as to be found in the rear of his colleagues.

"The forwards' great mutual understanding, perfected through a long series of matches played together, enabled them to position themselves as cleverly as the Austrians for the short pass, but they were by no means as inalienably given to it. Puskas, Bozsik and Hidegkuti were all equally as competent at the long pass across or down the middle of the field. This last was used with particularly devastating success, for the Hungarians were as rapid and able in turning defence into attack as the Arsenal team of 1930. The forwards, who could seem casual and almost insolent at times, specialised in sudden acceleration, when the opposing goal was suitably close.

"In fact, the Hungarians were concerned essentially with scoring goals, rather than stopping them, and the ability of their forwards ensured that they would generally have more of the play in any given match, thereby lightening the burden on their defenders...[Gyula] Grosics, the goalkeeper, never hesitated to dash out of his penalty area, thus frequently becoming an extra full-back. Since his timing was generally shrewd, the effect was to some extent to decrease the burden placed on the rest of the defence by the advanced position of the inside-forwards."

There was what might be called a typically pseudo-Puritan disciplinary approach. Thus, in 1953, Kocsis, of the majestic leap, and the insidious, quick left-winger Czibor were dropped, Mandi, no doubt under orders, accusing Kocsis of "living an irregular life" and Czibor of having an adverse effect on the rest of the team because of his supposedly "nervous disposition". In the event, it would be Czibor, nervous disposition or not, who would replace the injured Puskas to great effect in the 1954 World Cup, only for Puskas to resume his place, put Czibor back on the flank and drop right-winger Laszlo Budai for the final.

OLYMPIC GOLD

For some years, the Hungarian team were kept strictly behind the Iron Curtain, apart from their triumphant trip, supposedly as an amateur side, to the Helsinki Olympics of 1952. The final pattern had yet to be reached, Hidegkuti was playing on the right wing, and there was some sturdy resistance en route from Romania and Italy, not to mention Yugoslavia in the final. But Hungary thrashed Sweden 6-0 in the semi-final, proving that they could emphatically finish what they had begun.

They showed it again at Wembley and once more, shortly before the 1954 World Cup, when they thrashed England 7-1 in Budapest. The visitors were tactically naive beyond belief; Winterbottom, it seemed, had learned nothing from what had happened the previous November.

In Switzerland, the Hungarians were given a rough ride by a bruising Brazilian side in the quarter-finals in the "Battle of Berne". English referee Arthur Ellis sent off Bozsik and Nilton Santos for brawling, as well as another Brazilian, Humberto.

The semi-final was a classic, the Hungarians just getting the better of a fine Uruguayan team. So to the final, with a plainly not fully-fit Puskas. Even so, he gave Hungary an early lead and Czibor added a second shortly afterwards, only for West Germany to recover to win 3-2 in one of football's great anti-climaxes.

*Hungary were **unbeaten for four coruscating years** as they went into the 1954 World Cup*

"Match of the century"...Ferenc Puskas celebrates scoring in the 6-3 win over England

Pele makes his mark

The legend of Pele was unleashed unto the world, with the 1958 World Cup proving a trailer to a 12-year cycle of Brazilian success bar just one hiccup

***Campeones...* Brazil pose with the trophy in Stockholm**

Unlike 1950 this time there was to be no mistake. Instead of starting brilliantly and finishing on the wrong end of the final match, the Brazilians started slowly, sorted themselves out and ended in glory with a 5-2 victory over hosts Sweden.

The World Cup of 1958 will forever be linked with one of the greatest names in soccer history – Edson Arantes do Nascimento, of course Pele.

A 17-year-old boy, he had been taken along virtually for the ride, for experience. After all, with strikers of the calibre of Mazzola (aka Jose Altafini), Dida and Vava in the squad, when would he play?

Brazil unleashed a new and revolutionary 4-2-4 system and became synonymous with entertainment, but Brazilian self-confidence let them down. Having beaten Austria 3-0, thanks to a Mazzola double, they were held 0-0 by England – an England struggling to overcome the shattering blow of the Munich air disaster, which had taken Manchester United's left-back Roger Byrne, left-half Duncan Edwards and centre-forward Tommy Taylor.

It had been easy for Brazil against an Austrian side who included Helmut Senekowitsch at inside-forward. But all the midfield genius of Didi had been blocked by England and, for the final group match against World Cup newcomers Soviet Union, coach Vicente Feola decided there had to be changes.

The introduction of Pele was one; the explosion of Garrincha was another. Here were two men who would go on to dominate world soccer – yet Garrincha only owed his place to a lobby organised by Botafogo club-mate and left-back Nilton Santos. The team psychologist had advised Feola against him.

Fortunately Feola valued Nilton Santos' judgement more than that of the psychologist, and was proved right. Garrincha took the Soviets apart, Brazil won 2-0 thanks to a Vava brace, and advanced to the quarter-finals.

England required late goals from Derek Kevan and Tom Finney to rescue their match with the Soviets, but failure to beat Austria in Boras proved costly when Anatoliy Ilyin's goal gave the Soviets victory in the play-off and the second knockout spot.

Hosts Sweden finally recognised professionalism and recalled their Italian-based superstars. Expected to do well, Agne Simonsson and Kurt Hamrin scored twice in wins against Mexico and Hungary respectively; the goalless draw with Wales in Stockholm ensured victory in Group 3.

All four home nations had qualified, and Wales – with three draws – earned a play-off against a struggling Hungarian outfit, decimated by the 1956 uprising. Goals by Ivor Allchurch and Terry Medwin gave the Welsh a famous 2-1 victory in Stockholm.

In Group 1, Northern Ireland (who qualified at Italy's expense), did likewise. Holders West Germany, with Helmut Rahn in fine goalscoring form, topped the group though the plucky Irish did snatch a point off them to earn a play-off with Czechoslovakia in Malmo, where they further confounded the critics with Peter McParland scoring twice (as he did against the Germans) to take them through. Argentina, who'd beaten the Irish 3-1, crashed out after losing 6-1 to the Czechs.

Scotland fared badly. A 1-1 draw with Yugoslavia was their only consolation in Group 2. France topped the group, hitting seven past Paraguay in Norrkoping, with Just Fontaine scoring an outstanding hat-trick. He scored six in the three group matches, including the goal in Orebro that ended Scotland's challenge. In Vasteras, Todor Veselinovic's brace – against the run of play – enabled Yugoslavia to beat France 3-2 and thus snatch the second qualifying spot.

Austro-Hungarian failure in 1958 signalled the end of a great central European era: the quarter-finals rendered likewise remaining British interest.

Wales defended valiantly in Gothenburg to restrict Brazil to a Pele goal, but in Norrkoping, Northern Ireland found France unstoppable, the brilliant Fontaine scoring two more in a 4-0 win, fashioned by the great Raymond Kopa. The Irish, astutely captained by Danny Blanchflower, fell foul to injuries, and the exigencies of the group play-off with Czechoslovakia had taken its toll.

In Malmo – and as they had done in 1954 – the holders West Germany, with whom their World Cup-winning captain Fritz Walter had made a comeback aged 37, squeezed past Yugoslavia, Rahn, again, scoring the decisive goal.

Soviet Union proved no match for Sweden in Stockholm, as the hosts suddenly found belief that the trophy could be won. Hamrin, perennially elusive, scored first, and then laid on Simonsson's clinching goal.

In the Gothenburg semi-final, Hans Schafer's early goal failed to shatter the illusion. Lennart Skoglund equalised before the interval and, when German full-back Erich Juskowiak was sent off after the break for a swipe at Hamrin, the match began to swing Sweden's way. However, superiority was established only in the last nine minutes, as Gunnar Gren and Hamrin, amidst euphoric scenes, left Sweden within 90 minutes of the ultimate triumph.

In Stockholm in the second semi-final, Fontaine equalised Vava's second-minute goal, as France held their own against the mercurial Brazilians – until the loss of their elegant stopper Robert Jonquet through injury. Didi scored almost immediately after and, in a second-half annihilation, orchestrated a brilliant and acrobatic Pele hat-trick, as Brazil won 5-2.

France gained third place, Fontaine plundering another four goals in the 6-3 win over West Germany, hoisting his tally to a tournament record 13.

"If we can score first in the final," said Sweden's English manager, George Raynor, "the Brazilians will fall apart." But Swedish dreams did not legislate for Brazilian magic and, though the 49,737 spectators present in Stockholm's Rasunda stadium did indeed witness Nils Liedholm score first for Sweden as early as the fourth minute, by half-time Garrincha's pure genius had twice given Vava golden opportunities he did not squander. And in the second half, as Mario Zagallo, and Pele twice – one a conjuring trick – scored the goals that sealed a monumental victory, Brazil, finally, got their hands on Jules Rimet's prized golden statuette.

Iain Macleod & Keir Radnedge

TOP: Vava...the Brazilian scores in the semi-final against France

ABOVE: Record... nobody has scored more goals at a single finals than Just Fontaine's 13 for France

LEFT: A prince meets a king...Pele shaking hands with Gustaf VI Adolf, King of Sweden

The World Cup of 1958** will forever be linked with one of the greatest names in soccer history – **Edson Arantes do Nascimento, of course Pele

THE FINAL

June 29, 1958 – Stockholm, Attendance: 49,737

BRAZIL 5-2 SWEDEN

Vava 9, 32, Pele 55, 90, Zagallo 68

Team: Gilmar – Djalma Santos, Orlando, Bellini, Nilton Santos – Zito, Didi – Garrincha, Vava, Pele, Zagallo.
Coach: Vicente Feola

Liedholm 4, Simonsson 80

Team: Svensson – Bergmark, Gustavsson, Axbom – Borjesson, Parling – Hamrin, Gren, Simonsson, Liedholm, Skoglund.
Coach: George Raynor

The scandal in Chile

Thuggery and brutality marred the seventh World Cup finals but, in Pele's injury-enforced absence, Brazil had the tremendous Garrincha to thank for a second glorious triumph

Though the 1950s had been wonderfully entertaining, the 1960s brought defensive caution and an over-emphasis on tactics, which echoed throughout the 1962 tournament in Chile. Horrific earthquakes had devastated the country in 1960, and whilst the decision to go ahead was compassionate, Chile organised splendidly, a very disappointing tournament.

After 1958 there was a massive swing to imitate the new world champions and their 4-2-4 system. Winning was becoming ever more important and possible ways and means were all eagerly followed up. Sadly, as the Chile finals proved, some of those ways and means were not pretty.

Brazil had virtually the same team that had won the World Cup four years earlier, despite a lot of changes and experiments between tournaments. But how good they were is clear from the fact that after Pele was injured in the second game of the finals, Brazil carried on to win again without him.

ABOVE: Celebrations... Brazil after beating the Czechs in the World Cup final

Brazil's new star... Amarildo came in and shone up front alongside Vava and Garrincha following Pele's injury

Their new star was Amarildo, who replaced Pele after his injury, and he settled in quickly alongside his Botafogo colleagues in Nilton Santos, Garrincha, Didi and Mario Zagallo, who had now veered back towards midfield.

Playing at the beautiful coastal resort of Vina del Mar in Group 3, they opened with goals from Zagallo and Pele against Mexico – the great man's only full match.

Czechoslovakia, aided by the uncompromising central-defensive duo of Jan Popluhar and Svatopluk Pluskal, and the gifted midfield guidance of left-half Josef Masopust, beat a pseudo-Spanish side containing Ferenc Puskas and Jose Santamaria from the Hungarian and Uruguayan sides of 1954. A goalless draw with Brazil took Czechoslovakia through, though the holders required two late Amarildo strikes to beat Spain 2-1.

Along with Puskas and Santamaria, the Spaniards had also brought the great Alfredo Di Stefano with them. It was to be his first World Cup, at 35. Sadly, though, injuries prevented him from appearing. The Spaniards were managed by the controversial Helenio Herrera, who had originally been due to lead Italy. But that was

only a minor squall in the storm which overtook the *Azzurri*.

A couple of Italian journalists had, before the finals, written highly-critical articles about Chile and its organisation, with the result that the Italians were highly unpopular even before a ball had been kicked. Further, their inclusion of ex-South American internationals in Humberto Maschio and Omar Sivori (of Argentina) and Jose Altafini (previously Mazzola of Brazil) upset local opinion.

Nonetheless, the hosts, in Group 2, opened the tournament with a 3-1 win over Switzerland at the Estadio Nacional in Santiago, where the snow-capped Andes provided a panoramic background, while West Germany, after a defensive goalless draw with Italy – which typified the finals – eased past Switzerland and Chile, Uwe Seeler scoring crucial goals in each match.

When Italy met the hosts in the so-called "Battle of Santiago" all hell was let loose, with those scurrilous articles by Italian journalists provoking a violent kicking match. Two Italians – Mario David and Giorgio Ferrini – were dismissed, though it took eight minutes and police intervention to persuade the latter to leave, while Maschio suffered a broken nose. In the continuing pandemonium, the nine-man *Azzurri* lost to late goals by Jaime Ramirez and Jorge Toro and, as Chile went through, Italy went home.

Group 1, played in arid Arica in the north, twice witnessed Yugoslavia involved in bad-tempered matches. Against Soviet Union, Muhamed Mujic, after breaking Eduard Dubinski's leg, was sent home by his federation. The Yugoslavs lost 2-0. Then, against Uruguay, Vladica Popovic, together with the Uruguayan Angel Cabrera, received their marching orders, though goals from Josip Skoblar, Milan Galic and Drazan Jerkovic ensured victory.

After leading Colombia 4-1, the Soviets eventually had to settle for a share of the points, though, after Uruguay let Valentin Ivanov in for a last-minute winner, Yugoslavia's five-goal drubbing of Colombia ensured both European nations of quarter-final places.

In Rancagua, Group 4 was dominated by a fine Hungarian side graced by the gifted Florian Albert. His goal beat England, and then he scored three as Hungary hit six past Bulgaria. England, with names like Bobby Moore, Jimmy Greaves and Bobby Charlton in the side, recovered to beat Argentina 3-1, and qualified on goal difference after a drab goalless draw with Bulgaria.

The quarter-finals were hardly inspirational. Garrincha provided all the class and, at Vina del Mar, he tormented England and scored twice in a 3-1 win. And in Santiago, Petar Radakovic's goal for Yugoslavia finally laid the West German bogey. Czechoslovakia, with goalkeeper Viliam Schrojf in fine form, ended the hopes of the talented Hungarian side, Adolf Scherer's 13th-minute goal proving unlucky for the Magyars. In Arica, Lev Yashin, uncharacteristically, played poorly in the Soviet goal and was at fault on both occasions, as goals from Leonel Sanchez and Eladio Rojas sent the host nation into a frenzy of delight.

But in the semi-final against Brazil, watched by over 76,000 in Santiago, Chile found Garrincha a hot handful. He scored twice, set up another for Vava, but marred his part in the 4-2 win by being sent off in the dying stages. It proved the only defeat for the host nation who, under the astute Fernando Riera, would finish third.

In Vina del Mar, only 5,890 fans watched Yugoslavia fail to turn pressure into goals against Czechoslovakia in the other semi-final. Jerkovic cancelled out Josef Kadraba's early goal, but Scherer, with a breakaway goal followed by a penalty, sent the jubilant Czechs into the final for the second time in their history.

Garrincha was permitted to play in the final, but the Czechs refused to be overawed and Masopust gave them an early lead, before Schrojf's mistake, caught napping at the near post, let Amarildo in for what would prove a crucial equaliser. In the second half Brazil took command. Amarildo crossed for Zito to score and when the unfortunate Schrojf lost and dropped a Djalma Santos cross in the sun, Vava clinched a second world title for a good, but less than exhilarating Brazilian side.

Iain Macleod & Keir Radnedge

ABOVE: "Battle of Santiago"...Chile v Italy was marred by violence

LEFT: "Little Bird" Garrincha...Player of the Tournament and joint-top scorer at Chile 1962

*When **Italy met hosts Chile** in the so-called "Battle of Santiago" **all hell was let loose***

THE FINAL

June 17, 1962 – Santiago, Attendance: 68,679

BRAZIL 3-1 CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Amarildo 17, Zito 69, Vava 78

Team: Gilmar – Djalma Santos, Mauro Ramos, Zozimo, Nilton Santos – Zito, Didi – Garrincha, Vava, Amarildo, Zagallo.
Coach: Aymore Moreira

Masopust 15

Team: Schrojf – Tichy, Popluhar, Pluskal, Novak – Kvasnak, Masopust – Pospichal, Scherer, Kadraba, Jelinek.
Coach: Rudolf Vytlacil

1962
World Champions
BRAZIL

ICONIC MOMENT

WE WUZ ROBBED!

A West German Newsletter

Millions of German soccer fans will never accept the fact that their team were beaten by England, fairly and squarely, in the final of the 1966 World Cup. Having seen pictorial evidence provided by television and newsreels in slow-motion and reproduced by all papers here, they are convinced that the goal scored by Geoff Hurst in extra-time, giving England a decisive 3-2 lead, was quite illegitimate.

The whole country was seething and outraged at Swiss referee Gottfried Dienst's decision to award a goal after consulting the Azerbaijani linesman who, it is claimed, was badly posted and in any case most experts here point out that in such a case of doubt, the officials, in accordance with the rules, should have decided in favour of the defending team.

From the evidence that I have seen, it is clear that the ball having hit the underside of the bar rebounded well *before* the goal-line. Other commentators here protest also against the first (and equalising goal) claiming that Dienst was still talking to Wolfgang Overath while the English took a quick free-kick from which Hurst scored that vital goal. England's fourth goal is also regarded as suspect, because several spectators were already on the pitch, in anticipation of the final whistle, when Hurst beat goalkeeper Hans Tilkowski for the last time.

These controversial decisions have left a bitter taste here and although many countries would have been delighted finishing runners-up, the Germans feel cheated and who can blame them. Alas, West Germany have thus been prevented from joining Uruguay, Italy and Brazil, the elite who have already twice won the coveted Jules Rimet trophy.

Arthur Rotmil

in **FOCUS**

Geoff Hurst's controversial goal in the final – his second and England's third – which was adjudged to have crossed the line by Azerbaijani linesman Tofiq Bahramov

When football came home

Geoff Hurst's hat-trick and a controversial decision by an Azerbaijani linesman sealed English football's greatest moment, but the tournament had its ups and downs

When England hosted the 1966 tournament, the Mundial was big business. The Jules Rimet trophy disappeared temporarily, though football as an art form would prove a more permanent loss.

The patriotic instincts are to rejoice in a victory for the "Mother of Football", yet the more one thinks about the 1966 tournament as a whole, the more the disappointments loom large.

The glory, glory days disappeared forever, epitomised by Uruguay's eight-man defence gaining an archetypal goalless draw with England at Wembley's opening Group 1 match. Bobby Charlton's stupendous 30-yarder set up England's 2-0 win over Mexico and though a nasty Nobby Stiles tackle on Jacques Simon marred the match with France, Roger Hunt's two goals secured a quarter-final place. Goals from Pedro Rocha and Julio Cesar Cortes against France and another goalless draw with Mexico earned Uruguay second place.

In Group 2, West Germany beat Switzerland 5-0 at Hillsborough, with Helmut Haller and Franz Beckenbauer scoring twice, though in a fierce match at Villa Park, neither German nor Argentinian could score. The South Americans had Rafael Albrecht sent off. Also at Villa Park, Luis Artime scored twice in Argentina's 2-1 victory over Spain, but then laboured in beating Switzerland 2-0. Germany recalled Lothar Emmerich against Spain and he scored a remarkable goal to equalise Josep Maria Fuste's earlier effort. Uwe Seeler's late goal, however, gave Germany victory and top billing in the group.

Victory...glorious Three Lions

In Group 3, Pele's blistering free-kick and an ageing Garrincha's marvellous "banana" shot highlighted Brazil's 2-0 win over Bulgaria. But at Goodison Park again – this time without Pele – Brazil found a Hungarian side, which had gifted Portugal a 3-1 win at Old Trafford, quite majestic. Though Tostao equalised after Ferenc Bene netted an early goal, Janos Farkas scored a wonderful second-half volley and Kalman Meszoly made it 3-1. An identical scoreline against Bulgaria ensured Hungary's qualification. Portugal also beat Bulgaria, and at Goodison Park Brazil's changed side surrendered their title, bowing out 3-1 to Portugal.

Group 4 provided a monumental shock. Though Italy lost to Igor Chislenko's goal against the Soviet Union at Roker Park, they had beaten Chile 2-0, and little did anyone suspect what was to follow. Against North Korea – whom the Soviets had comfortably beaten – Italy made seven changes and consequently lost to Pak Doo-ik's sensational goal. They returned home to a barrage of rotten tomatoes. The North Koreans captured the nation's hearts and progressed along with the Soviets.

As in any World Cup, so many nations approached the finals with high hopes, only to prove their own worst enemies. At Hillsborough, German provocation increased and incensed Uruguay, who finishing the match with nine men and lost 4-0.

The Hungarians were excellent in the group stage, but the lack of an in-form goalkeeper – Jozsef Gelei was wholly responsible for ending Magyar hopes, gifting goals for Chislenko and Valeriy Porkuyan – spelled elimination in the quarter-finals to the Soviet Union.

That was the stopping point too for the most individually gifted of the finalists, Argentina. They were let down by their temperament in the 1-0 defeat to England which provided the almost tragi-comic confrontation between the giant Antonio Rattin and the little German referee Rudolf Kreitlein.

And who, of all those at Wembley watching the disgraceful England v Argentina clash, can forget the staggering shock of seeing the scoreboard suddenly announce: Portugal 0 North Korea 3?

The Portuguese, stridently led by Golden Boot winner Eusebio and his phenomenal four-goal performance, hit back to win 5-3 and take part in a fine semi-final at Wembley, losing 2-1 to an England side who chose the right moment to find their true form. Eusebio left the field in tears, his late penalty insignificant, as Charlton's two goals won it for England in an old-fashioned match with the emphasis on attack and free of foul play.

But though the Portuguese finished in a blaze of glory, don't forget this was the same team who had earlier viciously kicked Pele out of the World Cup as the supra-veteran Brazilians relinquished their title.

In a miserable, physical semi-final between the Soviet Union and West Germany, Chislenko turned villain, and as he went for an early bath goals from Haller and Beckenbauer got an uninspiring German side into the final.

For the first time in 12 years the final was an all-European affair: England against West Germany. A defensive error by Ray Wilson presented Haller with the opening goal, but Geoff Hurst glided through to head home the equaliser and Martin Peters put England ahead late in the second half. It looked all over, but in the dying seconds Wolfgang Weber knocked in a German equaliser from close range after Emmerich's free-kick cannoned off the wall, and the match steamed into extra-time.

Now was the moment for one of the biggest controversies. Did Hurst's shot, in extra-time, land behind the goal-line after it ricocheted down from the crossbar? The Azerbaijani linesman Tofiq Bahramov said it was over the line before Weber then headed clear. The Germans dispute it to this day, and for once television has been unable to clear up the matter.

Now 3-2 behind the Germans had to attack in force, and in so doing let Hurst run away in the dying embers to complete his hat-trick. Sir Alf Ramsey's "wingless wonders" were the new world champions.

Iain Macleod & Keir Radnedge

ABOVE: In front... Martin Peters puts England 2-1 ahead in the final

TOP: Lap of honour...Bobby Moore salutes the crowd

So many nations** approached the finals with high hopes, only to prove **their own worst enemies

THE FINAL

July 30, 1966 – Wembley, Attendance: 96,924 *After Extra-Time*

ENGLAND 4-2 WEST GERMANY

Hurst 18, 101, 120, Peters 78

Team: Banks – Cohen, Moore, J. Charlton, Wilson – Stiles – Ball, B. Charlton, Peters – Hunt, Hurst.
Coach: Alf Ramsey

Haller 12, Weber 89

Team: Tilkowski – Hottges, Schulz, Weber, Schnellinger – Beckenbauer, Overath – Haller, Seeler, Held, Emmerich.
Coach: Helmut Schon

1966
World Champions
ENGLAND

The General

Brian Glanville remembers England's 1966 World Cup-winning manager Sir Alf Ramsey

It was indeed another football world, and one in which Alf Ramsey – who was destined to play right-back for his country in a World Cup and then, 16 years later, to win it triumphantly as their manager – found no professional club until the age of 23.

How remote from these days, when you sometimes think that unless a young footballer has been taken on by a league club by the age of eight or nine they have no future.

It is an age, too, when we are led to believe that no one can succeed without coaching from as early as five years old. And yet Ramsey was never coached. He simply played and loved playing from childhood, mastering the skills of the game along country lanes, often with little rubber balls.

I saw a great deal of Ramsey all over the world when he was the England manager, though I can't say I knew him well. But then who did? Did I, ultimately, like him? Yes, emphatically. And those who accused him of having no sense of humour simply didn't know him at all.

Two instances may suffice. One, in Glasgow, in 1967, before what used to be known as the Intercontinental Cup, between Celtic and Racing Club of Buenos Aires at Hampden Park, I had tea with Alf in a city hotel. Then we went outside to call a taxi to take us to Hampden. Hopeless. We stood and stood until a battered blue car came along, full of young Scots fans. "Oh, it's Sir Alf! Get in, get in!" We did, and at once the raillery began: "That England team in the World Cup! So many poor players!"

"Well," said Alf, coolly, "for example, who?"

"That Roger Hunt!"

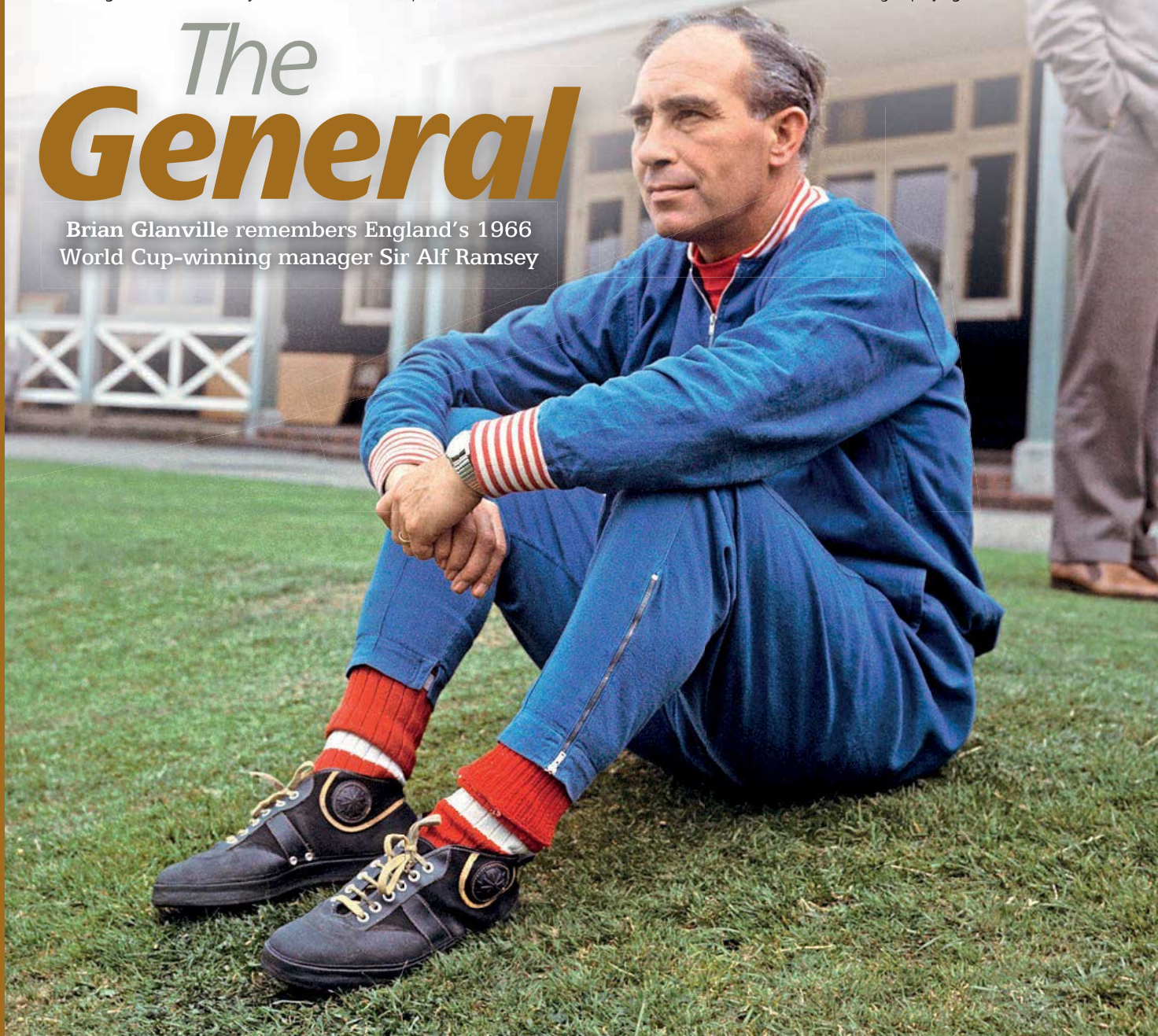
"Roger Hunt," said Alf, "scores 25 goals a season, every season. Yes, Roger Hunt's a poor player!"

Then there was the journey to a match out of London, sat in a railway compartment with several journalists and Alf. In that strange, strangled accent he reflected: "I don't know why you people keep telephoning me." He then went round each of us in turn, saying: "I never telephone you. I never telephone you!"

When he came to myself, he said: "You never telephone me!"

PLAYING CAREER

Portsmouth's loss (he was offered a trial by Pompey, for which he duly applied, but never heard another word) was emphatically Southampton's gain and Alf began playing for them while



"The General"... Sir Alf Ramsey

serving in the army, happy days in which he became a sergeant. He was a centre-half then, having not long since been a centre-forward. But real progress was made when he moved to right-back. England capped him for the first time at Highbury in 1948, an easy run-out, a 6-0 win against Switzerland.

The summer of 1949 saw him make an important move to Tottenham Hotspur; important because it brought him under the influence of Arthur Rowe, the ex-Spurs and England centre-half who had just taken over the team and was preparing to inculcate his exciting, original push-and-run tactics. " Make i t s imple, For More Mags Check sastatus.com make it accurate, make it quick" was h is formula.

Ramsey, to be honest, was never quick. At least not physically, though his football brain worked very fast indeed. His influence on the team was paramount. Not for nothing was he known as "The General".

That season, Spurs romped away with the Second Division, and the season after that they won the First Division title. Meanwhile, Alf had been a member of the England World Cup team which lost so sensationally to a ragtag and bobtail United States side in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

MANAGERIAL BEGINNINGS

In 1955, having retired after losing his place at Spurs, Ramsey was made the manager of Ipswich Town, which was an inspired appointment. He showed phenomenal skill in building a fine team from what you might call remnants.

Yet who could have foretold that, under Ramsey, Ipswich would emulate the Tottenham team whose "General" he had been, winning Second and First Division titles in successive seasons, in 1961 and 1962. And their disciplinary record was, like Alf's own as a player, immaculate.

It was after their triumph in 1962 that he left to become manager of England. He was not first choice; that was Jimmy Adamson, captain of Burnley, coach to the 1962 England World Cup team in Chile and a Footballer of the Year even though he never won a cap for his country. But Adamson turned them down, feeling he did not have enough experience.

When he took over, Ramsey insisted the selection committee, which ludicrously picked the teams, be abolished.

RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE

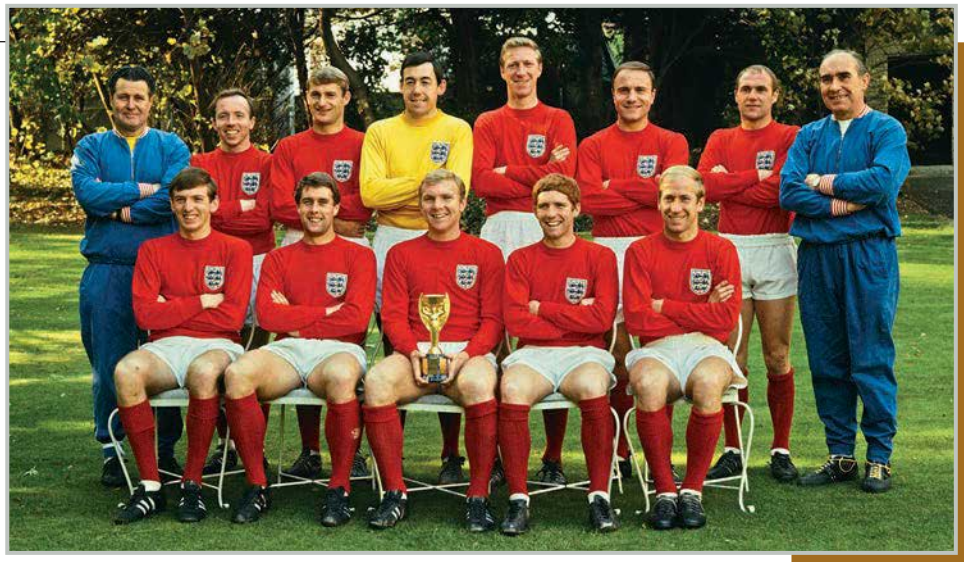
The truth was that, for Alf, football had an almost religious significance; you were either among the select – confined to players, coaches, managers – or you didn't count.

From the start, he insisted England would win the 1966 World Cup, but as time went by his increasingly cautious tactics came in for criticism and the team which did eventually win the World Cup was nicknamed the "wingless wonders". This, even though in the final itself, Alan Ball, essentially an inside-forward, ran wild on the right wing in extra-time and arguably won England the game, while, on the left, the right-footed Martin Peters – who was ten years ahead of his time, according to Ramsey – curled in his threatening crosses.

Unswervingly loyal to his men, Alf threatened to resign were Nobby Stiles dropped from the squad after a serious foul on France's Jacques Simon. Bobby Charlton, inside-forward and elusive left-winger by turns, now became the deep-lying centre-forward. Arguably, England began to play well only in the semi-final against Portugal. The quarter-final, against a bruising Argentina team which crudely misbehaved afterwards in the dressing room tunnel, moved Ramsey to utter words which would haunt him down the years in Latin America. In the semi-finals, he said, he hoped England would meet a team which wanted to play football "and not act as animals".

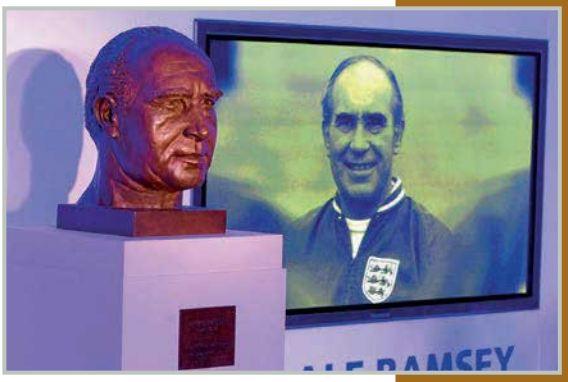
Portugal were duly beaten, and in the final West Germany forced extra-time with a controversial equaliser at the death. But Ramsey inspired his weary team – "You've beaten them once, now go out and do it again" – to prevail 4-2, though Geoff Hurst's second goal will forever be the subject of dispute over whether it crossed the line.

Sadly, Ramsey did not receive a World Cup winners' medal – nor did the 11 non-playing members of his squad. However in June 2009, following a decision by FIFA to award medals to all non-playing squad members and coaching staff at past World Cups, England's non-playing 11 received their medals. A right and just reward. Ramsey, who, like many of England's 1966 heroes, succumbed to Alzheimer's, had passed away in 1999. World Cup-winning right-back George Cohen received the medal on behalf of Ramsey's family.



ABOVE: England's World Cup winners...(top row, left to right): trainer Harold Shepherdson, Nobby Stiles, Roger Hunt, Gordon Banks, Jack Charlton, George Cohen, Ray Wilson, manager Alf Ramsey (bottom row): Martin Peters, Geoff Hurst, Bobby Moore, Alan Ball, Bobby Charlton

BELOW: Justice...the "forgotten" heroes (back row, left to right): Ron Springett, Jimmy Armfield, Ron Flowers, Norman Hunter, Ian Callaghan, John Connelly, George Eastham, Jimmy Greaves (front row): Peter Bonetti, Gerry Byrne, Terry Paine



Honour...a sculpture of Alf Ramsey was also unveiled at Wembley in 2009

ICONIC MOMENT

NO MEXICAN BLOOD BATH

While most critics had predicted a blood bath at the ninth World Cup in the heat and height of Mexico – where inflamed tempers were expected to boil over – the combination of keeping cool, strict refereeing and the good sense of the players resulted in matches free from brawls and red cards.

The other most pleasing aspect was the influx of goals. Though many came from blatant defensive errors, there were others scored from quick-thinking attacks and several from memorable free-kicks. The anticipated galaxy of scoreless draws did not materialise, which certainly added to the overall enjoyment of matches by spectators.

After all the gloomy predictions that the altitude and heat would reduce the finals to a shambles, the heat had in fact a beneficial effect, for they combined to slow the pace of the game. This has been one of soccer's greatest problems in the last decade: that the pace of the modern game is such that players have no time to look around and think.

In Mexico, however, everyone was so conscious of the altitude and heat that to play at the accustomed speed would have been suicidal. Thus the game was slowed, and where speed and power have dominated skill and intelligence for a decade, now it was the artists who held the upper hand.

The climax of the competition was undoubtedly the Italy v West Germany semi-final, which followed a predictable pattern. Italy, always content to defend, led 1-0, before West Germany, through classy libero Karl-Heinz Schnellinger, snatched an equaliser two minutes into injury-time to force extra-time.

Forced to go forward, this brought the best from the Italians. After scoring only one goal in their first 270 minutes of play, the *Azzurri* suddenly sprang to life and hit three goals in 13 minutes to win 4-3 and progress to the final.

With a sprinkling of rather surprising results, shock teams and sensational newcomers to the ranks of world football, the 1970 World Cup can be said to have produced as much for the game as any of its predecessors and perhaps much more than most.

Philip Rising & Eric Batty

in **FOCUS**

Mexico 1970 top scorer Gerd Muller nets for West Germany against Italy in the semi-final – one of five goals scored in extra-time – in a match dubbed "Game of the Century"

Campeons del mundo

In a supreme advertisement for entertaining and attacking football, Pele and Co. brought the World Cup trophy back to Brazil

ABOVE: For keeps... the Jules Rimet trophy became the permanent property of Brazil after Mexico 1970

LEFT: Captain... Carlos Alberto lifts the World Cup

Those lucky enough to be present in the Azteca Stadium on the afternoon of June 21, 1970 will never forget the scenes of emotion and jubilation they witnessed after Brazil had beaten Italy 4-1. Around the world, too, in front of television sets numbering hundreds of millions, soccer supporters joined in the applause for a superb climax to the 1970 World Cup finals.

It was not simply a magnificent and thoroughly deserved triumph for Brazil. Here was proof that football, played the way it was meant to be performed, with artistry and skill, can still succeed.

From their first match against the Czechs, the Brazilians showed that they had fully recaptured the magic that they lost four years ago. Pele provided proof that his genius lives on; and around him buzzed colleagues with finesse and enthusiasm that was poetry in motion.

Those who had any doubts about Pele's position as the world's greatest footballer will surely require no more convincing. Looking fitter and more determined than he has done for a long time, Pele stamped his incredible skill on the Mexico tournament. He is shown as an incomparable individual and a fine team player; a man of almost unbelievable ability and superb speed of thought. Who will ever forget his shot from inside his own half in that game against Czechoslovakia; or that magnificent dummy that sent Ladislao Mazurkiewicz into a different world in the semi-final with Uruguay?

Brazil ultimately won the final with goals to spare, yet during an absorbing first half the Italians never looked out of their class. Their tight marking and tremendous depth in defence left Brazil with little room in which to work. But, as in the semi-final against Uruguay, Brazil showed that they can only be contained for so long. Sooner or later the motor purrs into top gear and goals are conceived out of nothing.

In the earlier matches it was the opportunism of Pele, Jairzinho, Tostao and Rivelino that proved decisive but in the semi-final and final Brazil scored vital goals through their midfield duo of Gerson and Clodoaldo. Perhaps this is the secret; almost any member of the side is capable of becoming a match-winner.

Brazil were put on the road to victory over Italy with a splendid goal by Pele in the 18th minute. Tostao's throw-in from the left flank was lobbed high into the middle by Rivelino and there was Pele, soaring like an eagle, to head past a helpless Enrico Albertosi.

Until this point, and for some time after, too, Brazil's most consistent attacking force had been skipper Carlos Alberto. Jairzinho spent most of the opening period away from the right flank, taking Giacinto Facchetti with him, leaving a clear avenue for Carlos Alberto to exploit.

Brazil carelessly gave away an

equaliser in the 37th minute; and again it was their habit of playing short, square passes across the back four that cost them dearly. Roberto Boninsegna had been quick to intercept previously and once through there is little or no cover.

It was Clodoaldo, trying a piece of ball-jugglery that was never on, who was dispossessed by Boninsegna. Felix advanced from his goal and was a little unlucky to see the ball rebound off a couple of players, leaving Boninsegna with an open goal.

Despite this lapse, and the fact that the teams were level 1-1 at the interval, one could never envisage Italy winning. Brazil were not fully into their stride and it was not until Gerson put them ahead that they hit a superlative peak.

The second half was 20 minutes old when Jairzinho, attempting to strike through the middle, lost the ball. Gerson, who had a fine match throughout, gained possession, accelerated to his left and sent a marvellous shot to the left of Albertosi.

From this moment on the Italian marking, not surprisingly, became relatively slack and Jairzinho came more into his own. His wonderful dribbling skills had been rarely evident but he was obviously determined to maintain his record of having scored in every match in Mexico.

It took another piece of Pele magic – showing that for all his individualistic skill he is very much a team player – to keep that record intact. In the 70th minute Everaldo pushed a short free-kick to Gerson; from almost the halfway line Gerson floated a high, diagonal ball to Pele – a frequent tactic – and the great man himself headed down into the path of Jairzinho, who scored with delightful relish.

Teams other than Brazil might have been content to rest on a two-goal lead – as England did against West Germany in the quarter-finals. But not the world champions. After three they wanted four and that is exactly what they got.

Again Pele was the key man; laying the ball off for Carlos Alberto to hammer an unstoppable shot across Albertosi into the bottom corner. It was a fitting reward for the Brazilian captain; with no orthodox left-winger to mark he ran endlessly along the right flank for Brazil.

And so another World Cup triumph for Brazil – their third in 12 years – and with it, the permanent keeping of the magnificent Jules Rimet Trophy.

Those who had any doubts about ***Pele's position as the world's greatest footballer*** *will surely require no more convincing*

Triumph...Pele is hoisted in celebration

THE FINAL

June 21, 1970 – Mexico City, Attendance: 107,412

BRAZIL 4-1 ITALY

Pele 18, Gerson 66, Jairzinho 71, Carlos Alberto 86

Team: Felix – Carlos Alberto, Brito, Piazza, Everaldo – Gerson, Clodoaldo, Rivelino – Jairzinho, Tostao, Pele.
Coach: Mario Zagallo

Boninsegna 37

Team: Albertosi – Cera – Burgnich, Bertini (Juliano 74), Rosato, Facchetti – Domenghini, Mazzola, De Sisti – Boninsegna (Rivera 84), Riva.
Coach: Ferruccio Valcareggi

1970
World Champions
BRAZIL

More than a team

Brazil's 1970 World Cup-winning side are the most celebrated in the history of the game, but technical, tactical and training innovations were as important to their success as sheer individual brilliance. By Tim Vickery

"Pele and ten others"...Pele in action during the World Cup final

More than a football team, the Brazil 1970 side have become a myth. Consistently chosen as the best team ever, they are held up as the ultimate exponents of the beautiful game.

Sober judges might conclude that, man for man at least, Brazil's 1958 side was better. But the team that won in Mexico had one huge advantage – television. The 1970 World Cup was the first shown live in Brazil and many other places around the globe.

The 1970 team also benefited from evolution in other areas. Their individual brilliance was backed up by tactical ideas and methods of physical preparation that put them ahead of the field.

The mythology makes little space for such matters. The popular perception is of a group who swaggered off the beach to enchant the world with off-the-cuff samba soccer. In 1972 Danny Blanchflower wrote that "great teams don't need managers. Brazil won the World Cup in 1970 playing exhilarating football with a manager they'd had for three weeks. What influence can a man have who has only been with them for that length of time?"

In fact, Mario Zagallo had had two and a half months to coach the team, having taken over in the middle of March, and his predecessor, Joao Saldanha, had laid the groundwork. The colourful and charismatic Saldanha had shown the force of his personality from the day he was appointed in February 1969. The Brazil team had been dogged by regional rivalries, with journalists and directors from the various centres all pushing for the inclusion of their local heroes. But Saldanha put an instant stop to it all by immediately naming both his starting line-up and 11 reserves, and later that year his team cruised through World Cup qualification.

Saldanha was a very strange choice for the position, and not just because he had never been a player and was much more a journalist than a coach (though he had had a successful spell in charge of Botafogo a decade before). He was also vociferously on the political left at a time when Brazil's military dictatorship was at its most brutal.

The pressure on Saldanha's position brought out the worst of his volatile nature. And, critically, he fell out with Pele. As a consequence of their dispute, Saldanha seemed on the verge of dropping Brazil's star player.

Saldanha was sacked. Dino Sani, a midfielder at the 1958 finals, turned down the post, and Otto Gloria, who had taken Portugal to the 1966 semi-finals, was considered. But the job went to Zagallo, then just 38. In his first training session, he was approached by Pele,

who said: "You can drop me, but don't play dirty with me." Zagallo responded that the team would be Pele and ten others. And he made vital changes to the ten.

Zagallo had made a successful start to his coaching career, and had an immaculate pedigree as a player, having made a key contribution to the 1958 and 1962 World Cup wins.

STRAIN ON MIDFIELD

As a means of combating the extraordinary ability of strikers in the domestic game, Brazilian clubs had pioneered the use of a back four, adding an extra central defender to the usual three-man defence. The national team adopted the same tactic, but Zagallo was aware that the continuing use of two wingers put an enormous strain on the remaining midfield pair. Even during his playing days as a talented left-winger, he had sacrificed his natural instincts by tracking back when Brazil lost possession. As a result, he created 4-3-3.

"I took over without a fixed idea of what I was going to do," Zagallo recalls, "but I knew there would be a lot of changes, because I didn't accept 4-2-4. There's no way we could have won the World Cup using that system."

Saldanha's side, with Edu on the left wing, had no place for Rivelino, who was reserve for Gerson in midfield. At first Zagallo also left him on the bench, instead bringing in Paulo Cesar, a wonderfully skilful winger who would also work back. The press attacked it as a defensive move, Paulo Cesar was singled out for criticism, struggled for form and in came Rivelino, who seized the chance he was offered as a false left-winger.

Unhappy with his lumbering centre-backs, Zagallo pulled back Piazza from the holding midfield role to take one of the central defensive positions. It not only gave the coach more quality at the back but also created space for Clodoaldo to come into midfield.

The final piece of the jigsaw was slotted in up front. Although Tostao and Pele had played together under Saldanha, Zagallo initially thought they were too similar to work as a partnership. There was the added complication of Tostao's race for fitness after an eye operation.

The coach, who favoured a target man, tried out both Roberto Miranda and Dario. But, as Tostao recalls: "The style of Roberto or Dario was not right for that team. Pele, Gerson and Rivelino needed a player of movement, technique and quick thinking to combine with them. Zagallo saw this and decided to try me out, but without much conviction that it would work."

But it did, instantly, as Tostao stayed upfield as a reference point instead of taking his usual deep-lying role. The team was formed.

"We played as a block, compact," Zagallo says. "Jairzinho, Pele, Rivelino, all tracked back to join Gerson and Clodoaldo in midfield. I'm happy to see the team in terms of 4-5-1. We brought our team back behind the line of the ball. We didn't want to give space for the Europeans to hit us with quick counter-attacks.

"We preferred to defend in zones, to cover the space and not mark man-to-man. If we had gone with high-pressure marking, by the second half we would have run out of gas. So we saved our energy, dropped back, and then when we won possession the technical quality of the team stood out."

COACHING UTOPIA

Zagallo's experiments had taken him to the utopia of the coach – a balance between attack and defence. Final opponents Italy looked astonishingly naive in comparison. Defending on top of their keeper they left themselves stretched, forcing their midfielders to cover huge distances and leaving acres of space in which Gerson could pull the strings.

ABOVE: Crowning goal...skipper Carlos Alberto's late strike finds the corner

TOP: Gerson (Brazil's No.8)... pulling the strings

physical preparation was excellent – we won most games in the second half."

"We were so well prepared," adds Rivelino. "Even playing in that heat I don't remember once having to go over to the touchline to drink water."

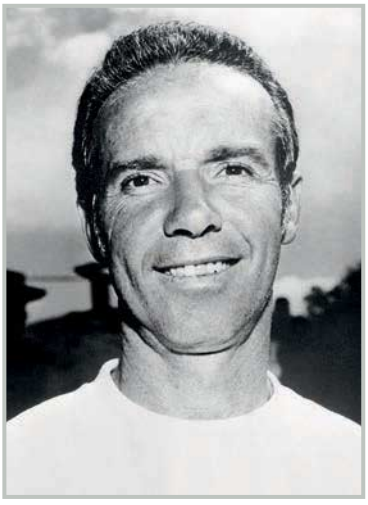
Instead, Rivelino, who would not have been in the team had Zagallo not taken over, has been able to drink from the cup of glory ever since, and toast the moment technique, tactics and training came together to make magic.

*The **Brazil 1970 side have become a myth**. Consistently chosen as **the best team ever***

But Brazil's advantage was not only technical and tactical, it was also physical. The 1970 World Cup was a triumph for the Brazilian concept of a technical commission, a group of specialists working together.

As far back as 1958 Brazil were experimenting with scientific methods in their preparation for games. By 1970, under Admildo Chirol, Brazil had assembled a group of physical preparation staff that included two future national team coaches – Claudio Coutinho and Carlos Alberto Parreira. Schedules were developed to cater to the individual needs of each player.

Zagallo says: "We had trained for 21 days at altitude [in Mexico] and knew scientifically, this would stay in the organism of the players. We then went down to Guadalajara, where we played all our games until the final [in Mexico City, 650 metres higher] – but we knew that altitude preparation was still inside them. No one else had done it. Our



Mario Zagallo... coaching utopia

ICONIC MOMENT

THE ULTIMATE POWER GAME

The 1970s were a unique era in world football. It was the first decade of colour television, and the dazzling tones and textures of the football played by Pele at the 1970 World Cup – and then by Johan Cruyff and Franz Beckenbauer at the 1974 finals – propelled the game at high speed towards its present remarkable pre-eminence.

The perspective of time lends an ever-sharper edge to the personal duel between the greatest-ever players of the Netherlands and Germany; a duel played out in personal achievement built on the contrasting foundations laid at Ajax and Bayern Munich and also on the international stage, where the great rivalry of the age was reignited at its most rarefied level: the 1974 World Cup final.

Sadly for the *Oranje*, it was not "total football" but "total failure" and the Dutch went the way of Hungary – also against West Germany – 20 years earlier in 1954.

Thus it was Beckenbauer, not Cruyff, who would hoist the brand-new World Cup trophy, which was revamped for the 1974 tournament after Brazil had been awarded the Jules Rimet trophy permanently following their third World Cup triumph in 1970.

Keir Radnedge

in **FOCUS**

Eternal rivals Beckenbauer and Cruyff, who between them won five of the six Ballon d'Or awards from 1971 to 1976, chase the ball in the 1974 World Cup final

Total football to total failure

The Netherlands, without doubt the most outstanding team throughout the 1974 World Cup finals, fell at the final hurdle against the hosts West Germany

The Netherlands, with Johan Cruyff and their total football, had swept past Uruguay, Sweden and Bulgaria in the first round, then Argentina, East Germany and Brazil to reach the final against the hosts at the 1974 World Cup in West Germany. But there it was to end in Dutch devastation.

Here the Ajax-Feyenoord mixture, which had been good enough to dominate European club soccer since 1970, let them down. After a first-minute penalty awarded by Jack Taylor, the Wolverhampton butcher, and converted by Johan Neeskens, the Netherlands sat back.

Instead of trying to ram home their advantage they tried to play with the Germans, tease them in front of their own Munich crowd. And they paid the literal penalty. A spot-kick to West Germany, and Paul Breitner equalised, and just before the half-time interval the inevitable, ever-dangerous Gerd Muller pushed in what proved the winner.

Not that the Germans had enjoyed such a straightforward passage. Their team had come to its peak in the 1972 European Championship, and manager

All hail *Der Kaiser*... Franz Beckenbauer lifts the brand-new World Cup trophy

Helmut Schon and skipper Franz Beckenbauer chopped and changed the side in the early games.

The 1-0 defeat by East Germany in Hamburg, in the first and only meeting between the two zones, seemed the ultimate humiliation at the time. Instead it proved ideal for Beckenbauer and Co. It meant they were kept apart from the Netherlands in the second-round group stage and, with the introduction of the hard-tackling midfielder Rainer Bonhof, won well against Yugoslavia, Sweden and Poland to reach the final.

The Poles, surprise victors over England in the qualifiers, reaffirmed the quality which had brought them the Olympic title in Munich two years earlier when they beat a prosaic, defence-orientated Brazil 1-0 in the third place game with a strike from the tournament's seven-goal top scorer Grzegorz Lato.

Lato was among the competition's best performers. German sports magazine *Kicker* held a poll among leading journalists and trainers to determine the best player of the finals and, as expected, Cruyff topped the voting with rival Beckenbauer a close runner-up. Poland playmaker Kazimierz Deyna, Dutch general Neeskens and Yugoslavia midfielder Branko Oblak also finished in the top five, with Lato, Brazil centre-back Luis Pereira, Scotland terrier Billy Bremner, Argentina schemer Carlos Babington and West Germany attacker Uli Hoeness completing the top ten.

World Soccer's best XI contained six of those players – Luis Pereira, Beckenbauer, Neeskens, Deyna, Lato and Cruyff, with goalkeeper Dino Zoff, full-backs Wim Suurbier and Breitner, Bulgarian midfielder Hristo Bonev and striker Gerd Muller making up the rest of the team.

Yugoslavia's disappointing failure in the World Cup in which they won only one game – astonishingly enough a record-equalling 9-0 against Zaire – did nothing to aid the cause of team manager Miljan Miljanic, already under fire at home for deciding to join Real Madrid after the finals.

Few of the Yugoslavians, who promised so much beforehand, lived up to their pre-World Cup reputations, with only Ivan Buljan, Stanislav Karasi and Jovan Acimovic maintaining any real level of consistency.

With their 1970 World Cup-winning team decimated, Brazil really had no chance. They were left with free-kicks – which was virtually all that was left of Rivelino's artillery – and the grafting of a much slower Jairzinho. Even so, they managed to get to fourth place. And if they could have found someone who could shoot straight, they might have got to the final itself, which, in the end, was won for the second time by the West Germans.

Keir Radnedge & Philip Rising

ABOVE: Record win...Dusan Bajevic scores as Yugoslavia thrash Zaire 9-0

TOP: Dutch downed ...Johan Cruyff is brought down by Uli Hoeness

*The Dutch tried to **play with the Germans**, tease them **in front of their own Munich crowd***

THE FINAL

July 7, 1974 – Munich, Attendance: 75,200

WEST GERMANY 2-1 NETHERLANDS

Breitner 25 pen, G. Muller 43

Team: Maier – Vogts, Schwarzenbeck, Beckenbauer, Breitner – Bonhof, Overath, Hoeness – Grabowski, G. Muller, Holzenbein.
Coach: Helmut Schon

Neeskens 2 pen

Team: Jongbloed – Suurbier, Haan, Rijsbergen (De Jong 69), Krol – Jansen, Neeskens, Van Hanegem – Rep, Cruyff, Rensenbrink (R. Van de Kerkhof 46).
Coach: Rinus Michels

1974
World Champions
WEST GERMANY

Battle of River Plate sees the Dutch lose again

After losing the 1974 final, defeat in the 1978 final – yet again to the World Cup host nation – spelled the end of the *Oranje* era. But the physicality on display during the contest only served to underline the place the 1978 epic must hold in soccer history

After being beaten 2-1 in 1974 by West Germany, the Dutch era must now surely be at an end after their failure against all the odds in the River Plate Stadium, Buenos Aires, to Argentina, where for the second time Rudi Krol and Co. were denied the victory they so manifestly deserved.

And if the Netherlands are bitter in defeat, they have every excuse after the cynical tricks pulled by the Argentines and the organisers before the football had even begun.

It was unforgivable that the Dutch team should have been allowed to walk out on their own before the start. It was unforgivable that they should have been kept waiting five minutes by their ill-mannered hosts. And it was unforgivable of the Argentines to make such a calculated fuss about Rene van de Kerkhof's arm injury protection.

All this after the Argentine team, and more especially their fans and the people of their country, had been such attentive hosts. It left a bad taste in the mouth. But that initial drama will also add to the legend of this game. It was no classic football match. It was a battle.

The Dutch were certainly the more openly rugged of the sides, but referee Sergio Gonella and his linesmen – Erich Linemayr and Ramon Barreto – must carry a lot of blame for the off-the-ball incidents which were left unpunished.

Too many times a stray elbow would catch a player in the face. Too many times a malicious shove in the back followed a tackle. Too many times Gonella just wasn't in touch with what was going on.

ABOVE: At the double...Argentina's Mario Kempes (left) celebrates his second goal in the final

But let's forget about Gonella. Fortunately he wasn't involved in any controversial moments on the goals. Aside from the organisational provocation the Dutch felt, it remains to be said that they didn't win because of their own failings in front of goal. As simple as that.

Johnny Rep had a clear header after six minutes, and saw Ubaldo Fillol make an excellent save from a shot in the 27th. Fillol saved brilliantly with his foot from Rob Rensenbrink almost on half-time, and after all their second-half

pressure, which culminated in substitute Dick Nanninga's 82nd-minute equaliser to Mario Kempes' first-half goal, in the last minute of normal time Rensenbrink hit the post.

For the Dutch those moments won't bear thinking about. But Kempes it was who turned himself not only into the Argentine hero but into the tournament's top scorer with six goals when he scored the second in the 15th minute of extra-time and then laid on Daniel Bertoni's clincher with five minutes left.

Kempes was, for me, the player of the tournament. Too much of his time he spent idling lazily on the fringes of play, but when he decided the time was ripe for another burst, few defenders could get near him.

His opening goal was beautifully conceived and taken. Two square passes came in from the left, from Osvaldo Ardiles and Leopoldo Luque, there was a defensive hesitation, and Kempes slipped in to sidestep a defender and beat Jan Jongbloed from close range.

His second goal was similar. This time he took the pass from Bertoni and had to scramble over Jongbloed to put the ball in at the second attempt. Finally he worked the one-two with Bertoni which saw the latter tie up the title.

The Dutch worked bravely to try to deny them. In Rudi Krol, Johan Neeskens, Arie Haan and Willy van de Kerkhof they had players whose skill, stamina and self-sacrifice confirmed them as giants of present-day football.

But having poured all this praise on the Dutch – the better team on the day, with greater class and poise – what about our new world champions?

For one thing, the Argentines showed far greater consistency throughout the finals. The Dutch played inconsistently in the first round – rank badly against Scotland where Archie Gemmill scored a memorable goal – thrashed Austria, drew well with West Germany, then scraped past Italy.

Argentina started the tournament at 100mph and stepped up the tempo as the finals went on. The odd point was that, come the final, they slowed down. For a long time it looked as if they had given their all getting to the last day and had nothing left to offer.

That might have been true for some of the players. But there were others who were superb. Fillol in goal for a start. Some might say he was lucky to save with his foot from Rensenbrink but he had spread himself well, and was exceptionally quick to scramble across. The best goalkeeper of the tournament?

Perhaps the final made him just that. Then there was skipper Daniel Passarella, one of the most physically fearsome players in the finals. Not just for his tackling, but for his total commitment to the cause of Argentina which too often took him not only beyond the call of duty, but beyond the rules too. Passarella had been a disappointment to himself in the earlier games, but in the final he was tremendous.

"Fearsome"... Argentina's World Cup-winning captain Daniel Passarella

Then Americo Gallego. Very much the unsung player, but a key man tactically. It was Gallego's solid work back in the centre of defence which kept Argentina on an even keel in the second half. Alongside him in midfield Ardiles had his best game of the finals, too, until the constant hacking which he had suffered from the start of the tournament forced his substitution.

And if for once striker Luque was a disappointment, well covered by Ernie Brandts and then Willy van de Kerkhof, as the Dutch pushed forward in the second half, there was always the danger of winger Bertoni leaving his markers behind on the slippery pitch.

There was always going to be goals in the game. Neither defence was particularly sound and the Argentines bravely maintained their all-out philosophy by maintaining three men up in attack even when the defence was under pressure.

That is to the credit of 39-year-old manager Cesar Luis Menotti. He took over four years ago knowing that his responsibility was to change the face of Argentine soccer. He had to instil a sense of fair play and a desire to attack, attack, attack in players whose clubs wanted only defensive football and sharp practice. Victory for Argentina was a grand triumph for Menotti.

For decades Argentina has been the greatest producer of skilled footballers in the world. For too long these skills have been hidden by the win-at-all-costs attitude of too many directors and managers. Here's hoping that Menotti's example will set the tone for a new age in Argentine soccer.

Just as the Dutch have given our game so much, especially over the past few years, so Argentina has the resources and talent too.

Keir Radnedge

***For decades** Argentina has been the **greatest producer of skilled footballers** in the world*

THE FINAL

June 25, 1978 – Buenos Aires, Attendance: 71,483 *After Extra-Time*

ARGENTINA 3-1 NETHERLANDS

Kempes 38,105, Bertoni 115

Team: Fillol – Olguin, L. Galvan, Passarella, Tarantini – Ardiles (Larrosa 66), Gallego, Kempes – Bertoni, Luque, Ortiz (Houseman 74).
Coach: Cesar Luis Menotti

Nanninga 82

Team: Jongbloed – Jansen (Suurbier 72), Brandts, Krol, Poortvliet – Neeskens, Haan, W. Van de Kerkhof – R. Van de Kerkhof, Rep (Nanninga 58), Rensenbrink.
Coach: Ernst Happel

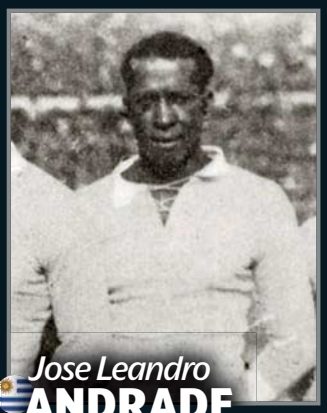
World Cup **greats**

Ahead of Spain 1982, *World Soccer* profiled a selection of "men who mattered" – players who had made World Cup history in the early years between 1930 and 1978

A

ADEMIR

Often named as one of Brazil's greatest players of all time. He was centre-forward of the 1950 World Cup side, aided by equally brilliant inside-forwards in Zizinho and Jair, and won the Golden Boot with nine goals. He began his career as an outside-left and played his last game for Brazil in 1953, scoring 32 goals in 39 internationals.



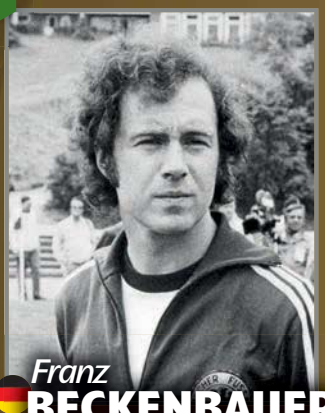
Jose Leandro ANDRADE

The first black footballer to establish an international reputation. Andrade was right-half with the Uruguayan team who won the 1924 and 1928 Olympic titles and the 1930 World Cup. His nephew Victor Rodriguez Andrade would go on to be a World Cup winner with Uruguay 20 years later at Brazil 1950.

B

Gordon BANKS

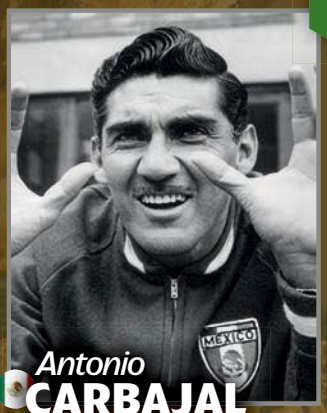
One of, if not the greatest of English goalkeepers, playing every minute of England's successful 1966 World Cup campaign. He will be forever immortalised by his save from Pele at the 1970 World Cup group, but illness forced him out of the vital quarter-final against West Germany.



Franz BECKENBAUER

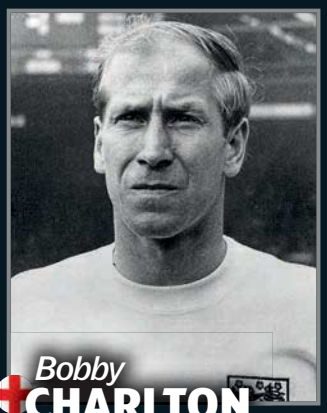
Nicknamed "*Der Kaiser*" and one of the greatest players in the game's history. Led Bayern Munich to three European Cups and the Cup Winners' Cup as well as the Intercontinental Cup. He captained West Germany to World Cup victory in Munich in 1974 and revolutionised the role of sweeper or *libero*.

C



Antonio CARBAJAL

Goalkeeper who owes his place in World Cup history as the first player to appear in the finals tournament on five separate occasions – starting in Brazil in 1950 and ending up at Wembley in England in 1966. It was an appropriate end, for Carbajal made his Mexico debut at the London Olympics back in 1948.



Bobby CHARLTON

One of the most popular of all English players, both home and abroad. A survivor of the Munich air crash who returned to win the World Cup with England in 1966 and European Cup success with Manchester United two years later – also at Wembley. Also played in the 1962 and 1970 World Cup finals and was a reserve in 1958 in Sweden.

C

Johan CRUYFF

Along with Beckenbauer, one of the two superstars of the 1970s. Inspired Ajax to their triple European Cup success as a roving centre-forward. He moved to Barcelona for a then world-record £922,000 in 1973, but returned to take the Netherlands to the 1974 World Cup final defeat at the hands of West Germany. The architect of total football.

D

Kazimierz DEYNA

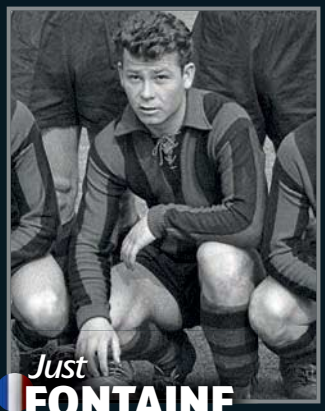
Captain, leader and midfield inspiration of the Poland team that surprised the world by winning the 1972 Olympic title, then returned to Munich two years later to finish third at the World Cup, having eliminated England in the qualifiers.

E

EUSEBIO

The most explosive forward in European football in the early 1960s, when his goals earned Benfica a dramatic European Cup victory over Real Madrid in 1962. Eusebio, a Mozambique discovery along with his club and international team-mate Mario Coluna, was top scorer in the 1966 World Cup finals with nine goals. Voted European Footballer of the Year in 1965.

F



Just FONTAINE

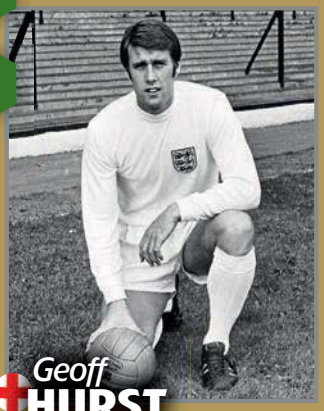
Born in 1933 in Marrakesh, Morocco, Fontaine, holds the record for most goals scored in the finals of a World Cup, with the 13 he grabbed in Sweden in 1958, when France finished third. Fontaine was an all-round centre-forward who owed his place in the 1958 team only thanks to an injury to Reims' Rene Bliard. Scored 30 goals in 21 appearances for France.

G

GARRINCHA

One of the greatest of Brazilian players, a World Cup winner in 1958 and 1962. Yet the right-winger had been born with terribly-twisted legs which required a series of operations. Was brought into the Brazil team during the 1958 finals at the demand of the other players. In 1962 he actually survived an expulsion in the semi-final against Chile to play in the final. His last international was against Hungary in the 1966 World Cup – his only defeat while playing for Brazil.

H



Geoff HURST

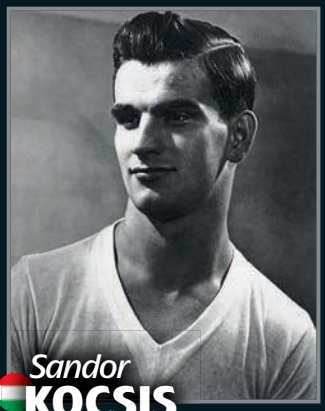
Central striker who made his name immortal by becoming the first-ever player to score a hat-trick in a World Cup final in England's 4-2 victory over West Germany in extra-time in 1966. Yet Hurst owed his place only thanks to injury to star striker Jimmy Greaves earlier in the tournament. Hurst stepped in, scored the winner against Argentina and stayed.

J

JAIRZINHO

Outside-right and the only player ever to score in every match at a single World Cup including the final, a feat he achieved in helping Brazil to victory in Mexico in 1970. He had played without success in the 1966 finals. Nicknamed "The Hurricane", Jairzinho scored 33 goals in 81 games, and when he retired only Pele and Zico had scored more goals for the national team.

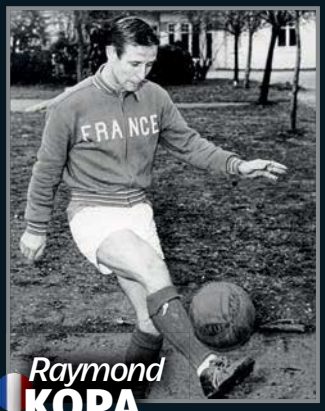
K



Sandor KOCSIS

To the French the "*Tete d'Or*" – the "Man with the Golden Head". But Kocsis, inside-right with the Hungary team of the 1950s, was more than just a brilliant header of the ball. He dovetailed brilliantly with Ferenc Puskas to establish a reputation as one of the game's greatest players. Shared all the Magical Magyars' triumphs and disappointments. Later starred with Barcelona in Spain. Scored 75 goals in 68 internationals.

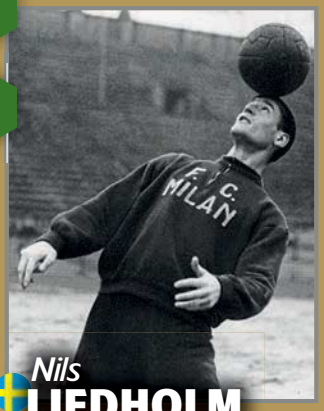
K



Raymond KOPA

Centre-forward and occasional outside-right. Inspired Reims in the early 1950s but his transfer had already been agreed with Real Madrid when the Spaniards beat Kopa and Co. in the first European Cup final in 1956. Returned in 1958 to inspire France to third place in Sweden, laying on many of the vital goal openings for Just Fontaine. Played 45 times for France in all, scoring 18 goals.

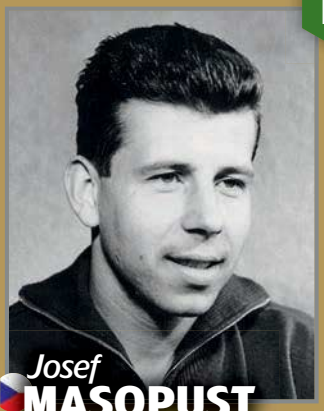
L



Nils LIEDHOLM

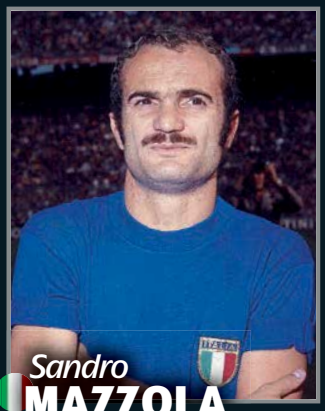
Originally an inside-forward he was spotted by Milan playing outside-left for Sweden in the 1948 Olymps. Had a great career in Italy, moving to wing-half and later sweeper, but moved back to midfield to guide Sweden to the 1958 World Cup final against Brazil. Played in a star-studded Sweden side along with Agne Simonsson, Lennart Skoglund and Kurt Hamrin.

M



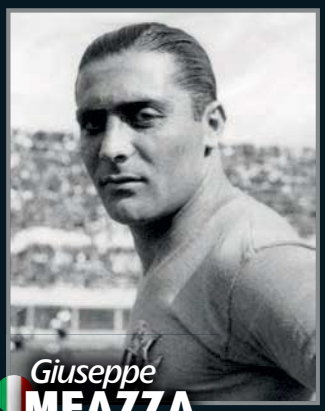
Josef MASOPUST

Left-half for most of his career, though his style resembled more closely the old-fashioned attacking centre-half. Masopust starred in the 1962 World Cup, scoring the opening goal in the final against Brazil, which Czechoslovakia lost 3-1. He earned the European Footballer of the Year crown in 1962.



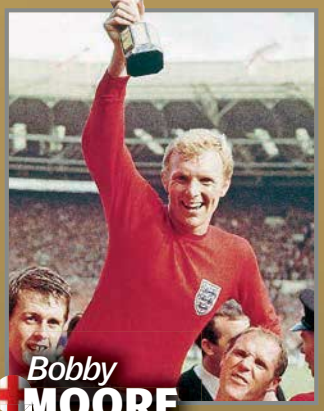
Sandro MAZZOLA

Forward, midfield general and a beautifully-balanced player. Son of a great father, Valentino, who was killed along with the rest of the Torino team in the 1949 Superga air crash. Mazzola junior surpassed his father's achievements, winning world, European and domestic titles at club level with Inter and helping Italy to the 1970 World Cup final.



Giuseppe MEAZZA

One of the greatest of all Italian forwards. Only he and Giovanni Ferrari played in the World Cup-winning team in both the 1934 and 1938 finals and both had made their debuts together in a 4-2 win over Switzerland in 1930. Won 53 caps between 1930 and 1939, scoring 33 goals and is Internazionale's record scorer. The San Siro stadium in Milan was given his name after his death in 1979.



Bobby MOORE

Central defender and England captain in the 1966 World Cup success. Criticised sometimes as slow moving, but one of the fastest thinkers in the game's history. A commanding defender, he was one of the stars of the finals again in Mexico in 1970. The 1966 World Cup win was his third successive Wembley success after lifting the FA Cup in 1964 and the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1965 with his club side West Ham United.

N

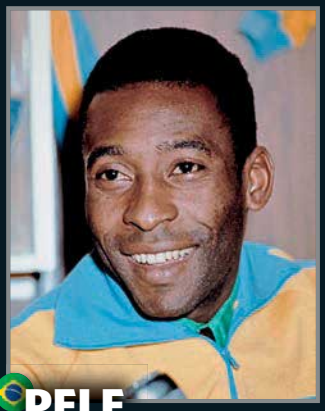
Gerd MULLER

Simply one of the greatest opportunist goalscorers in the history of international football. "*Der Bomber*" was a member of the great Bayern Munich team that dominated European club football in the mid-1970s, and scored the winning goal in the 1974 World Cup final against the Netherlands. Netted 68 goals in 62 internationals before joining Fort Lauderdale Strikers.

Johan NEESKENS

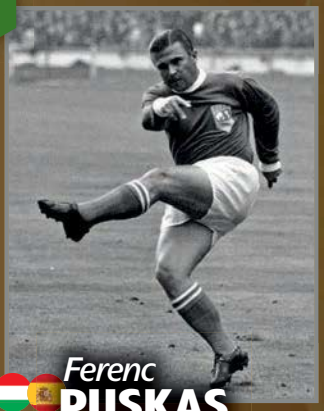
Tough midfielder who played for the Netherlands in the World Cup final defeats of both 1974 and 1978 – making history by converting, after just 90 seconds in the 1974 final, the first-ever penalty in football's premier football match. Starred at club level for Ajax and Barcelona.

P



PELE

The most famous footballer of all time – the legend beginning with the two-goal display in the 1958 World Cup win when he was still only 17 in Sweden. He missed the 1962 triumph because of injury but, after vowing never to play in the World Cup again after being kicked out (literally) in 1966, he inspired Brazil's victory in Mexico in 1970. Scored 77 goals in 92 international appearances.



Ferenc PUSKAS

Inside-left who could do more with his left foot than most players could do with both feet. Captain and star of stars with Hungary in the early 1950s, and goal machine at club level with Honved and Real Madrid. He captained Hungary to the 1952 Olympic victory and – controversially – in the 1954 World Cup final loss to West Germany. Adopted Spanish nationality and played for his new country in the World Cup in Chile in 1962. Hit 84 goals in 85 games for Hungary; won four caps for Spain.

R

The dominating midfield general of Brazilian football throughout the 1970s. Appeared as a "false" outside-left in the outstanding World Cup-winning team in Mexico in 1970, but was the acknowledged general in 1974 in West Germany and 1978 in Argentina, though in the latter injuries and internal difficulties reduced his potential.

RIVELINO

For years the Golden Boy of Italian football. One of the most gifted of all European inside-forwards and a club legend at Milan, winning the Ballon d'Or in 1969. However, he was a somewhat controversial figure with Italy – particularly during the 1970 World Cup in which he was frequently used as a substitute for Sandro Mazzola.

Gianni RIVERA

S

Juan Alberto SCHIAFFINO

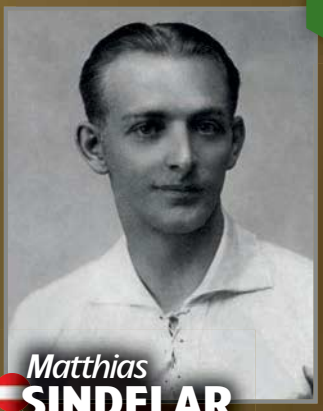
Genius of an inside-forward who inspired Uruguay's 1950 World Cup victory and was still so much a star in 1954 in Switzerland that Milan immediately paid a then world-record £72,000 for him. Led Milan to the 1958 European Cup final and added four caps for Italy to the 21 he had won for Uruguay.

Uwe SEELER

Centre-forward and the figurehead of West German football between 1958 and 1970. A brave but intelligent attacker, he demonstrated his skill in the way he moved back in 1970 to allow for the inclusion of Gerd Muller. Captain of Hamburg, he turned down a stream of offers from Italy and Spain even before West German football went full-time. Scored 43 goals in 72 internationals.

Y

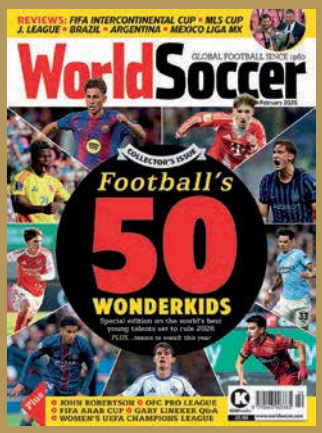
One of the greatest centre-forwards in pre-war football. Nicknamed the "Man of Paper", he was so slim and one of the leading exponents of the Vienna School, where skill and finesse became almost more important than putting the ball in the net. Led the Austrian *Wunderteam* to fourth place at the 1934 World Cup.



Matthias SINDELAR

One of the greatest of all goalkeepers. Very nearly quit football for ice hockey after becoming bored at being perpetual reserve to "Tiger" Alexei Khomich with Dynamo Moscow. But once he had established himself he soon became a world star. Appeared in the World Cup finals in 1958, 1962 and 1966 and was still in the squad in Mexico in 1970.

Lev YASHIN



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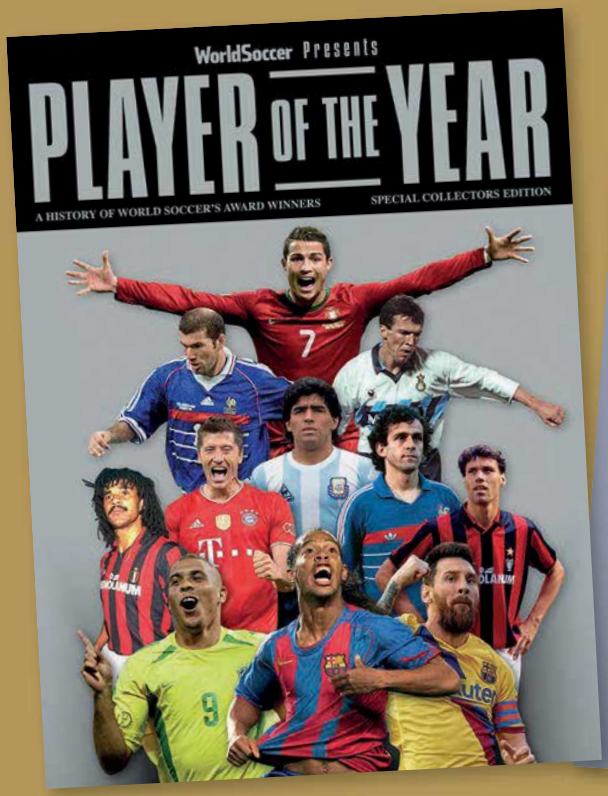

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ICONIC MOMENT

COMPELLING BUT BRUTAL

In 1982, Spain hosted the tournament, which increased to 24 finalists, evoking considerable controversy long before a ball was kicked in what Argentina's Diego Maradona would later label "a World Cup of bruises".

Group 1 was dreadful: Italy offering little indication of the transformation to come, sneaking through after tedious draws with Poland, Peru and Cameroon.

In Gijon, Rabah Madjer and Lakhdar Belloumi scored against West Germany to create the upset of the finals, but Algeria were eliminated from Group 2 by the Austria-Germany "Anschluss" game.

Belgium's Erwin Vandenbergh scored the first opening-game goal since 1962, against holders Argentina, but the latter still qualified from Group 3 after they beat Hungary and El Salvador.

In Bilbao, England beat France, Czechoslovakia and Kuwait without any fuss to progress from Group 4, while Northern Ireland took Group 5 with a momentous victory over hosts Spain.

In Group 6, Brazil's magical football restored one's faith in the game. After Socrates and Eder's marvellous strikes v Soviet Union, Brazil scored four goals each past Scotland and New Zealand.

Four further groups of three provided the semi-finalists – a Zbigniew Boniek-inspired Poland; a resurgent West Germany, who knocked out England and Spain; Italy, whose renaissance saw the disappointing exit of the elegant Brazilians; and a superb France.

In the semis, Italy's transformation continued. Poland, like Brazil, had no answer to Paolo Rossi, who added a double to his previous round hat-trick against the Brazilians. The superb West Germany v France semi-final had six goals, penalties and joined the elite list of all-time great matches.

To penalties after a barnstorming 3-3 draw following extra-time, and Toni Schumacher, villain, after his dreadful challenge on Patrick Battiston, turned hero to save Maxime Bossis' penalty.

But West Germany had shot their bolt and, at the Bernabeu, Italy coasted to a famous third World Cup triumph.

Iain Macleod

in FOCUS

Disgraceful moments in 1982 saw Algeria (pictured in green and white against Austria) knocked out after the "Disgrace of Gijon" where West Germany and Austria's final group match descended to a near standstill, while inset sees Toni Schumacher before his sickening collision with Patrick Battiston

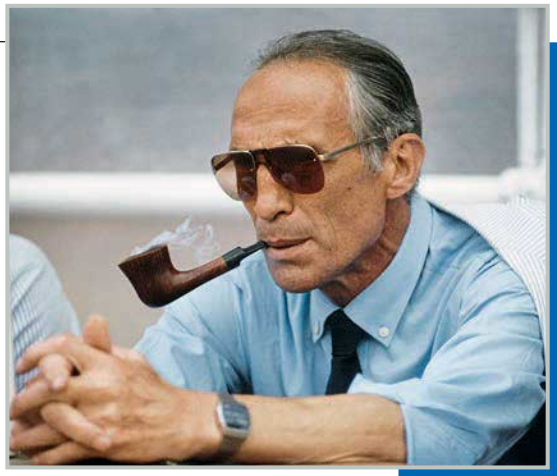
The Italians clinch third World Cup crown

After a slow start to the 1982 finals, Italy's star striker Paolo Rossi, just back from a two-year ban, inspired his team to World Cup glory in Spain

Even after the first group stage of the 1982 World Cup, who would have put money on Italy to win it? They'd drawn three times, prosaically, in cool Galicia. It was just a couple of years after an outrageous match-fixing scandal, when scores of leading Italian players had participated in the so-called *Totonero*. Forward Paolo Rossi, surprise star of Italy's World Cup in Argentina in 1978, had been one of those embroiled, and though he had had a year cut off his three-year ban, enabling him to be in Spain, he had been firing blanks.

Coach Enzo Bearzot had become a target for his enemies and relations with the media were at rock bottom. Mischievous reports saw the players impose what in Italy is known as *silenzio stampa*, a refusal to talk to the press, save through their hallowed veteran goalkeeper and captain, Dino Zoff.

The loss, through injury, of Roberto Bettega, who had dovetailed so well with Rossi in Argentina, was a serious blow to Italy. The more so as Rossi looked rusty and ineffectual – hardly a surprise as he had been out of action for two years.



ABOVE: Enzo Bearzot...*"Vecchio"* aka "Old Man"

ABOVE LEFT: Iconic image... Marco Tardelli's memorable goal celebration

So to 1982, and the first group stage games in Vigo. Italy opened by drawing 0-0 with Poland and then 1-1 with Peru, who should certainly have been given a penalty when notorious Italy defender Claudio Gentile brought down winger Juan Oblitas. The third, somewhat controversial, draw was against Africans Cameroon. The two goals were scored in the space of a minute. On the hour, Cameroon's usually adroit keeper, Thomas N'Kono, slipped, enabling Ciccio Graziani to score. Away at once went Cameroon to equalise.

Did, as some believed, Italy benefit by playing in the cool of Galicia, while other teams had struggled in the heat? At all events, they came to life in the second group stage at Barcelona's smaller Sarria stadium. Totally unfancied, the *Azzurri* proceeded to beat both Argentina – Gentile ruthlessly man-marking Diego Maradona – then Brazil.

Italy won the first game in style, having been obliged – Gentile apart – to come out to play at last. Romanian referee Nicolae Rainea gave Maradona no protection. The first half was dire, Rossi was still firing blanks. But, in the second half, the *Azzurri* came to life. An inspired pass by accomplished playmaker Giancarlo Antognoni sent Marco Tardelli through to hit the first goal. Graziani did the same for Rossi, but when the striker's shot rebounded from the keeper, Ubaldo Fillol, Bruno Conti pulled the ball back and full-back Antonio Cabrini scored. Late on Daniel Passarella netted from a free-kick when the Italians were still lining up their wall, but it wasn't enough for Argentina.

Only in the second group game, against a highly-talented Brazil, did Rossi come suddenly and superbly to life. His three goals, his dazzling opportunism, won Italy a game that Brazil would surely otherwise have taken, a game that was worthy to have been the World Cup final.

Brazil's coruscating midfield wasn't equalled by the defence or the attack. Keeper Waldir Peres, with remarkable prescience, had said beforehand that his chief fear was that Rossi would take wing. This he did after only five minutes. Conti sent Cabrini down the left, and Rossi closed in on his precise cross to head past Peres, his timing exquisite. Seven minutes more, Zico passed impeccably to Socrates, who beat Zoff at his near post. After 25 minutes Rossi pounced on a careless pass by Toninho Cerezo to make it 2-1. Midway through the second half Falcao shot through a gap to make it 2-2, but Zoff defied further Brazilian attacks.

Then, 15 minutes from time, Tardelli drove back a half-cleared corner, the ball broke to Rossi and that was 3-2.

In the semi-final, still in Barcelona but at Camp Nou, Poland were far less of a problem than in Vigo. The Italians, with Rossi in deadly form again, outplayed a side badly missing their suspended star turn, Zbigniew Boniek. Rossi ably scored the goals in the 2-0 win but, alas, Antognoni, painfully kicked and subbed, would miss the final against West Germany at the Bernabeu in Madrid.

After the German goalkeeper Toni Schumacher went unpunished following his brutal challenge on France's Patrick Battiston in the other semi, the rest of the football world hoped the Germans would be beaten. So it was to be.

The first half was poor and goalless. Halfway through, Italy were awarded a penalty when Hans-Peter Briegel fouled Conti but Cabrini shot wide – with regular taker Antognoni sitting in the stands.

Sweeper Uli Stielike should have been expelled for a foul on Gabriele Oriali but wasn't even booked by Brazilian referee Arnaldo Coelho.

Then, on 57 minutes, Gentile put in a cross and Rossi, who had timed his run perfectly, headed home. Twelve minutes later, sweeper Gaetano Scirea broke up the right, swapped passes with Giuseppe Bergomi, and his cross was acrobatically converted by Tardelli. On 80 minutes, the inexhaustible Conti ran half the length of the field and substitute striker Alessandro Altobelli, brought in early on for Graziani, struck home the third.

Only in the second group game, against a ***highly-talented Brazil****, did Paolo Rossi come* ***suddenly and superbly to life***

Paul Breitner, on what was once his home ground, scored what was hardly a consolation goal for the Germans.

Italy and Bearzot had risen from the ashes of Galicia to triumph.

Brian Glanville

THE FINAL

July 11, 1982 – Madrid, Attendance: 90,000

ITALY 3-1 WEST GERMANY

Rossi 57, Tardelli 69, Altobelli 81

Team: Zoff – Bergomi, Gentile, Scirea, Collovati, Cabrini – Oriali, Tardelli – Conti, Rossi, Graziani (Altobelli 7, Causio 89).
Coach: Enzo Bearzot

Breitner 83

Team: Schumacher – Kaltz, K. Forster, Stielike, B. Forster, Briegel – Dremmler (Hrubesch 62), Breitner – Rummenigge (H. Muller 70), Fischer, Littbarski.
Coach: Jupp Derwall

1982
World Champions
ITALY

Rossi comes good

Paddy Agnew recalls how Italy's star striker Paolo Rossi went from tragedy to triumph

As football icons go, Paolo Rossi always came across as an approachable guy.

I moved to Italy in the winter of 1985, three years after his moment of crowning glory in the summer of 1982, when his six goals power-blasted Italy to an unexpected World Cup win in Spain. Even at the distance of three years, the echoes of that triumph were palpable, be it through TV ads featuring the heroes of 1982 or through well-founded sports media concern that there would be no repeat show at the following

year's 1986 World Cup in Mexico.

Many Italians still felt excited by and proud of that victory, Italy's first World Cup triumph since the far-off days of the Mussolini-Pozzo team in 1934 and 1938. By the time I arrived in Italy, however, Rossi's career was clearly on a downward spiral during his difficult (and only) season with Milan. He had missed the first ten games of the season through injury and he ended up scoring just two Serie A goals, admittedly both in a 2-2 derby draw with Internazionale.

Looking at his goals now, people might be inclined to dismiss him as a "poacher". Yet, he was much more than that. He was a player whose speed of mind and foot, whose footballing intelligence more than compensated for his lack of weight and muscle.

He was no big central target man, no Gigi Riva. A more apt comparison would be Muhammad Ali: he would float like a butterfly and sting like a bee. One of the adjectives most often used about Rossi during the many tributes paid to him by colleagues was that he was "light". He had a "light touch" on and off the field. Milan great, Paolo Maldini, whose career was just beginning as Rossi's ended in 1987, put it this way: "For me, Paolo was so many things. He was the hero of 1982, a World Cup in which my father was part of the Italian coaching staff. For all Italians, he was a legend... I will always recall him for his light touch. He was a superstar but at the same time an absolutely normal person."

When I met up with Rossi in the summer of 1997, ten years after he had retired from football, I experienced that "absolutely normal person" for myself. I had been fortunate enough to be hired as an interpreter for a six-part BBC documentary, Golden Boots, presented by Gary Lineker.

Interviews had been set up with a cast of living legends, including the 1982 coach Enzo Bearzot, ex-Inter and Italy midfielder Sandro Mazzola and, of course, Paolo Rossi. Without exception, they were all delighted to meet Lineker and exchange stories with him.

The interview took place in Vicenza where Rossi's career had really kicked off in the 1977-78 season when, as a young player on loan from Juventus, he scored 24 goals for the newly-promoted side, in the process attracting the attention of Italy coach, Bearzot. Hence, when he retired from football, he settled in Vicenza where he became successfully involved in the real estate business.

Not knowing Vicenza, I rang Rossi as we drove up to the city, both to confirm that we were on the way and to ask where we should meet. By that stage of his life, Rossi had done a lot of interviews, so he immediately suggested we meet up at the Santuario della Madonna di Monte Berico, a splendid baroque Basilica which sits high on a hill overlooking the city. He knew only too well that it would make for good TV images.

When the news of Rossi's death was announced in December 2020, Lineker said on social media: "How terribly sad. A wonderful striker and a lovely man. Scored a World Cup hat-trick in one of the greatest games of all time against Brazil. A true finisher's life has finished way too soon."

Just like his life, Rossi's career was also curtailed prematurely by injury. I recall talking to the late Ray Wilkins, then a Milan player, back in the autumn of 1986. He had just played alongside Rossi for a season. When I asked him about the legend of Italian football, he shook his head ruefully, saying that Paolo was "a fantastic guy" but "he has got serious injury problems".

Indeed he had, retiring from football less than a year later in 1987 at the age of just 31. Of average height and slender build, Rossi was arguably not built for the intense wear and tear of football. He had joined Juventus as a 16-year-old, having been spotted in the Florence youth club, Cattolica Virtus.

Like many great champions, Rossi's early career was not easy. By the age of 19, he had already had three cartilages removed from his knees. In the end, as Ray Wilkins pointed out, that physical frailty curtailed his career.

Indeed, Rossi himself often pointed out that his professional career really only lasted seven seasons. Not only was it curtailed by injury but, of course, he also lost two years, between the ages of 24 and 26, to that infamous ban for alleged involvement in the 1980 "*Totonero*" match-fixing scandal.

To his dying day, Rossi claimed his total innocence, saying that his only crime had been to chat for 50 seconds with "some guy" presented to him by a team-mate the day before the game. "I lost two years of my career, from 24-26, for something I didn't do. For a 50 second conversation."

As in many epic dramas, however, the nightmare had a happy ending. National coach Bearzot had already taken a big gamble on Rossi by taking him to the World Cup in 1978. Despite the fact that he had only two previous caps, Rossi was a key man in Italy's attack, and rewarded the faith shown in him with three goals in Argentina, earning the Silver Ball in the process, and helping to make Italy a seriously good side in their fourth-placed finish. The myth of Pablito was born.

If Bearzot's first gamble was big, the second one was monumental. Four years later, he insisted on making Rossi an automatic first choice in attack in Spain, despite the fact that he had only played three games in two years because of his suspension. The rest, of course, is much loved history.

Rossi was ***much more than a "poacher"****. He was a player with* ***speed of mind and foot***

World champion ...Rossi with the World Cup trophy

Brilliant but unbalanced

Brian Glanville recalls the exceptional Brazil side that dazzled yet failed to reach even the semi-finals at the 1982 World Cup in Spain

"Brazilian football is a thing played to music." So said the ever-controversial, innovative, explosive and eccentric Joao Saldanha, sceptical of the stewardship of Claudio Coutinho before the 1978 World Cup finals in Argentina. Rightly, as it proved: Coutinho was essentially a physical trainer putting emphasis on fitness and hard running.

Saldanha himself had been Brazil's team manager from 1969 to 1970 until Mario Zagallo took over the team and won the World Cup in great style.

The 1982 team had a manager, Tele Santana, far more closely in tune with the ethos of Brazilian football and the desires of its fans – for attacking football, pure and simple, the kind that had so triumphantly brought the World Cup back to Brazil in 1970.

Santana promised, and made good his promise, that Brazil would be an attacking team in Spain. The one emerging problem was that he would not have the attackers. Reinaldo, the talented young centre-forward, was injured yet again. The even younger Careca was injured too, and sent home soon after he arrived in Spain. Roberto Dinamite, his replacement was not the answer.

Santana was something of an idealist, who deplored the notion of violent play, and his misfortune was that his team proved brilliant but unbalanced. There was an abundance of supreme talent in midfield – Socrates, Zico, Toninho Cerezo, Falcao – but who was to lead the attack? When Zico, before the finals, denounced Argentina as a one-man team, that man, Diego Maradona, replied with some cogency that Brazil had no forwards. So it would prove. Tall striker Serginho had his moments but was never going to be the answer. "When Serginho plays," lamented the disparaging Saldanha, "the ball is square."

But what midfielders! Falcao, then aged 24, had been left out of Coutinho's squad in 1978. He was "un-Brazilian" to the extent that he was not a notable ball player, preferring to keep the ball moving with often decisive passes, but he was described as "a leader and a born perfectionist". Emerging with Internacional of Porto Alegre, he moved successfully to Roma in 1980. Santana gave him his chance on tour before the World Cup because he knew that Toninho Cerezo would be suspended for the opening game. Falcao duly seized it; he couldn't be excluded.

The captain, Socrates of Corinthians, a lanky, bearded left-winger, was tireless, ubiquitous, loped rather than ran, controlled the ball immaculately, distributed it shrewdly, was no natural athlete, but a consummate footballer. He was unaffected it seemed by his penchant for beer and cigarettes.

Zico, that dazzling little attacking midfielder, was described in Brazil as being "constructed in the laboratory". This was because, as a tiny, underweight, fragile boy, plainly possessed of unusual football skills, he owed his career to the doctor of his favourite Rio club, Flamengo, who put him on a general regime of rehabilitation with spectacular success. Zico's ball skills were exceptional, his shooting, especially from free-kicks, deadly. Now 29, he had put bitter memories of 1978 behind him.

FIRST ROUND MARVELS

Brazil's first game of the 1982 finals, against the Soviet Union in Seville, was of high quality. Falcao was especially dynamic and influential; Toninho Cerezo was hardly missed. Alas, the tradition of weak Brazilian goalkeepers would be continued by the shaky Waldir Peres, who allowed a long shot by Andriy Bal to bounce embarrassingly through his arms. Brazil, however, simply shrugged off this setback.

The towering Socrates – his long legs covering great areas of ground – one minute covering for adventurous left-back Junior, the next striking at goal, was always loping with intent. The Soviet Union, to their credit, held out against the exuberant skills of the Brazilian midfield until 15 minutes from time, when Socrates equalised with a stupendous shot. With two minutes to go, left-winger Eder hit the winner with another powerful drive following a dummy by Falcao.

Tele Santana...the coach who gave his men freedom

Brazil had an easier task in their next game, again in Seville against a talented but erratic Scottish team, who fought bravely but ultimately waned in the intense heat. Just as the Soviets had done, the Scots took a deceptive lead. Right-back David Narey scored a splendid goal after 18 minutes. The Scots had five men in their midfield, but the Brazilian midfield, now including Toninho Cerezo, was simply irresistible.

Still, it was the 33rd minute until Brazil equalised, with one of Zico's famous free-kicks, perfectly swerved from outside the box around the defensive wall and past keeper Alan Rough. On 48 minutes, centre-back Oscar came up for Junior's corner, soared above the defence and headed his team into the lead. "From then on," admitted Scotland's celebrated manager, Jock Stein, "we were really chasing the game." In vain; Eder and Falcao also scored to make it 4-1.

Brazil then brushed New Zealand aside 4-0 – with two more goals for Zico and a goal apiece for Falcao and Serginho – and so advanced to the second stage of this strangely-designed competition. They found themselves in a Barcelona-based three-team group with powerful opponents and old enemies Argentina and an Italian team destined, as exemplified by forward Paolo Rossi, to improve dramatically.

Brazil's first game was against the Argentinians, who had already been beaten 2-1 by Italy. Maradona had been manhandled out of that game through the malign attention of Claudio Gentile. Zico put Brazil ahead after 11 minutes – driving in a loose ball after a swerving Eder free-kick had struck the underside of the bar – but it would be about an hour before the more talented Brazilians became truly dominant. Gradually, the superb midfield would control the game.

*There was an abundance of **supreme talent in midfield** – Socrates, Zico, Toninho Cerezo, Falcao*

A glorious pass by Zico sent Falcao racing down the right, and when his cross came over, Serginho, always dangerous in the air whatever his failings on the ground, leaped to head it in. Another inspired pass by Zico enabled the vibrantly overlapping Junior to score the third. Zico's "reward" was a brutal foul by Argentina captain and centre-

back Daniel Passarella, for which he should have been sent off. Zico hobbled off, and Batista took his place, only to be viciously chopped down by a petulant and frustrated Maradona, who was indeed sent off. Ramon Diaz's goal a minute from time was no consolation.

WORLD CUP CLASSIC

So to the classic encounter between Brazil and Italy. Brazil were strong favourites, but that was to reckon without Rossi, the rust at last run out of his limbs. After poor performances in Galicia in the opening phase, the forward's opportunism would now be irresistible. Even Brazil's superb midfield couldn't make up for the weaknesses behind it and ahead of it.

Within five minutes Rossi scored, darting in ahead of the defence to head in an Antonio Cabrini cross. The forward was only a small fellow, and his headed goals were all triumphs of guile, anticipation and speed of movement.

It took just seven minutes for Brazil to equalise. Zico, who like Maradona would suffer the Gentile treatment, eventually having his shirt ripped off his back, now went past the defender and sent Socrates clear with one of his superbly angled passes. The angle was narrow but Socrates' shot ripped between Dino Zoff and his near post.

After 25 minutes, a moment of carelessness from Toninho Cerezo, a lax pass intended for Junior, enabled the alert Rossi, ever the opportunist, to dart in and put Italy ahead once more. Brazil equalised midway through the second half. Falcao dribbled across the penalty area, saw a gap, spun and beat Zoff with a tremendous left-foot shot.

Brazil replaced Serginho with winger Paulo Isidoro. "Now the ball is round again," Saldanha said in the press box. But the 40-year-old Zoff was in defiant mood, and while Zico had faded, Italy's playmaker, Giancarlo Antognoni, was increasingly effective.

A draw would have put Brazil into the semi-finals, but they were not to get it. In the 75th minute the match was lost and won. First, Zoff fumbled a shot by Toninho Cerezo, but snatched the ball back just before Isidoro could swoop. Away went Italy to force a corner. When it was only half cleared, Marco Tardelli drove the ball back into the box and it broke to Rossi, who struck the winner.

WHO WAS WHO?

(Top row, left to right)

Waldir Peres
Goalkeeper, also a member of Brazil's 1974 and 1978 World Cup squads.

Leandro
Right-back who spent his entire career at Flamengo.

Oscar
Central defender who was also in the 1978 and 1986 World Cup squads.

Falcao
Classy central midfielder who went on to win the Serie A title with Roma.

Luizinho
Centre-back who played 34 games for Brazil.

Junior
Talented attacking left-back who also featured in midfield and spent most of his career at Flamengo.

(Bottom row, left to right)

Socrates
Elegant captain, qualified doctor, notable smoker and political activist.

Toninho Cerezo
Midfielder who enjoyed considerable playing success in Italy, firstly with Roma and then Sampdoria.

Serginho
Striker, excellent in the air, whose skills did not match those of Brazil's midfielders.

Zico
One of the stars of the side, dubbed "The White Pele". Gifted playmaker and free-kick specialist.

Eder
Left-winger with a fierce shot. Won 52 Brazil caps, scoring eight goals, and starred for Atletico Mineiro.

LEFT: Supreme talent...Zico

ICONIC MOMENT

MEXICO '86 A WINNER

The greatest test of any World Cup is the impression it makes on the casual viewer around the planet. On that simple basis, Mexico '86 was a winner.

But after every World Cup comes the moment for truth: when one tries to take stock of the state of the game based upon a month watching the supposedly finest exponents in competition at the apex of the greatest of games, analysing such things as format, tactics, etc.

When the first World Cup took place in 1930 the teams were sorted into four first-round groups. A knockout system was employed in 1934 and 1938 but proved unpopular. Thus the pendulum swung to the other extreme in 1950 when even the final stage was a mini-league event. A mixture of groups and knockout was tried in Switzerland in 1954 before FIFA came up in 1958 with the format which remains the model for 16-team tournaments. That remained good enough until 1974 when FIFA created the second round mini-leagues. It was not until 1982, and the semi-finals, that FIFA went back to a knockout element. This proved such a breath of fresh air that it was extended in Mexico, and this finals' knockout section was a huge success with the standard of play improving 100 per cent.

No revolutions this time tactically; nothing to compare with the awakening into 4-2-4 in 1958 or "total football" in 1974, although there was confirmation that a five-man midfield is the most flexible way to approach a major finals.

In terms of the hosts, the bulk of initial hostility to Mexico was down to fear of the altitude and the heat. On both counts, the concern now appears to have been overstated, demonstrating the advanced physical standards set and maintained by today's players.

Profits from the 1986 World Cup will not be confirmed until later this year but ticket sales, television rights, and sponsorship and merchandising income are expected to run into the millions.

But while the accountants count the money, the rest of us can bask in the memories. Memories such as that of Diego Maradona's great, great second goal against England. Those of us who were there will not forget Mexico '86. Nor will the game itself.

Keir Radnedge

in **FOCUS**

Diego Maradona's mesmerising solo effort and "Hand of God" goal against England

Maradona magic shines

Argentina and their mercurial skipper Diego Maradona prove worthy winners of the 1986 World Cup

World Cup history has shown us time and again that it is not always the best teams that win the game's greatest prize.

Hungary in 1954, Brazil in 1950 then the Netherlands in 1974 have demonstrated clearly and bitterly that the World Cup is not only about consistency, it is about producing the necessary performance on a given day; it is being able to raise your game to the occasion.

On that basis, we can at least recognise that Argentina deserved to win the 1986 World Cup crowned in silver and gold in the sunshine of Mexico City's Estadio Azteca.

Skipper Diego Maradona was hoisted shoulder high by team-mates and a disorganised, uncontrolled mass of fans as he waved the golden trophy towards the sky...and the sky – or at least the stadium roof – responded by opening up a

shower of silver confetti, which glinted in the sun with reflected glory.

That reflected glory was also Argentina's in the amazing shadow cast by their own captain throughout the finals. Maradona was not only the winning captain, he was the star of the tournament and he provided moments of magic and inspiration which left every other player looking pedestrian.

This was Maradona's World Cup – just as Argentine manager Carlos Bilardo had promised us it would be. He took on players with teasing regularity yet he showed against Uruguay in the second round that his talent was built on brave foundations. He did not shirk a tackle though few people would have blamed him if he had; a couple of his solo breaks against Uruguay were incredible and hinted strongly at things to come...against England, Belgium and West Germany.

Maradona's contribution against England remains a matter of some controversy. Television replays appeared to indicate handball for his first goal. Maradona then, of course, produced one of those fabulous individual slaloms which took him from the halfway line, through the England defence and Peter Shilton was beaten again.

For me, Maradona's second goal was one of the great goals of this, or any other, World Cup. It was not merely the supreme skill but its achievement under immense pressure and at the game's highest level. That this was no freak was underlined when two-goal Maradona repeated the trick against Belgium in the semi-finals. The Belgians never gave up trying; but they were never in the same league.

Nor, to be frank, were the West Germans in the final although they contributed to a classic climax and to the dramatic content with their late comeback when it seemed the entire occasion had passed them by.

West Germany had struggled to reach the final in the first place and in the showpiece itself looked unusually short of will-power. In the first half there was little organisation about their play, a total lack of penetration in attack and even goalkeeper Toni Schumacher spoiled an otherwise excellent tournament with a giveaway mistake on the first Argentine goal.

The scorer was Jose Luis Brown, the sweeper who had owed his place in the team to the absence through illness and then injury of 1978 Cup-winning captain Daniel Passarella. Brown had been rock-solid at the back and provided a lethal element of surprise when he made his annual foray beyond the halfway line to head home Jorge Burruchaga's free-kick in the 23rd minute.

Brown later damaged his shoulder in a fall after heading clear in defence but refused to come off. His courage and confidence was one key aspect of both his goal and Argentina's entire display. Another decisive role was that of Burruchaga. His consistently high standards throughout the finals, tying together all the loose ends in midfield and alternating attacking positions with Maradona and Jorge Valdano, was an essential factor in the South Americans' overall triumph. His passing accuracy was a delight to watch and the curling free-kick with which he fooled keeper Schumacher was typically effective.

As for Maradona, he had been fouled by Lothar Matthaus for the free-kick in the first place. Matthaus stuck to the task of trying to subdue Maradona with tenacity, skill and a praiseworthy degree of fair play. But while the fact that Maradona did not get his name on the scoresheet may be cosmetic proof of the success of the Matthaus mission, the facts reveal that Maradona played vital roles in all three goals.

Under his leadership it would not have been beyond Argentina to have scored again before half-time. Instead it was not until ten minutes after the interval that striker Valdano, enjoying far greater freedom of expression under Bilardo than in his club role with Real Madrid, doubled the lead.

Valdano, at this World Cup one of the game's most impressive all-round attackers, underlined that general consensus by starting and completing the move. He was back in his own half on the right when he made space then moved the ball on. Hector Enrique and Maradona carried the move forward and Valdano then turned up over on the left on the edge of the German penalty area to lure Schumacher from goal then slide the ball coolly past his left hand and just inside the far post.

It should have been 3-0 shortly afterwards. A beautiful angled through pass from Burruchaga curled into the path of Enrique, who had run clear of the West German defence. He was well onside when the ball was played but Costa Rican linesman Berny Ulloa Morera, panicking, raised his flag, to Argentine annoyance.

To rub salt into Argentine wounds, the Germans celebrated their escape by pulling level. First skipper Karl-Heinz Rummenigge then half-time substitute Rudi Voller pushed the ball past Nery Pumpido from close range before Burruchaga wrote his name into World Cup history with the winner for Argentina. Maradona, of course, was again the creator.

It was all over – the entire 1986 World Cup – bar a great deal of happy shouting in the Azteca, in Mexico City and, of course, in Buenos Aires.

Keir Radnedge

*This was **Maradona's World Cup** – he provided moments of **magic and inspiration***

ABOVE: World Cup final battle ...Maradona in action against West Germany

TOP: Repeat... Maradona's solo strike against Belgium was a mirror-image of his wondergoal versus England

THE FINAL

June 29, 1986 – Mexico City, Attendance: 114,600

ARGENTINA 3-2 WEST GERMANY

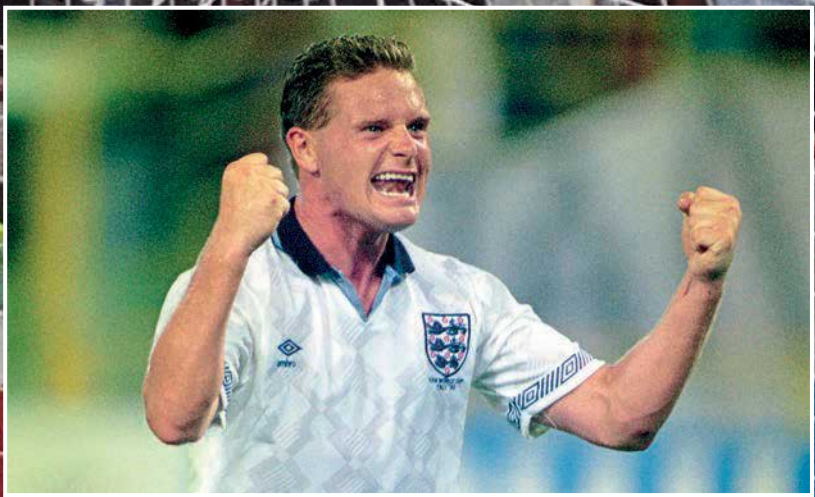
Brown 23, Valdano 55, Burruchaga 83

Team: Pumpido – Cuciuffo, Brown, Ruggeri – Giusti, Enrique, Batista, Burruchaga (Trobbiani 90), Olarticoechea – Valdano, Maradona.
Coach: Carlos Bilardo

Rummenigge 74, Voller 80

Team: Schumacher – Berthold, K. Forster, Jakobs, Briegel, Brehme – Eder, Matthaus, Magath (Hoeness 61), – Rummenigge, Allofs (Voller 46).
Coach: Franz Beckenbauer

ICONIC MOMENT



ITALIA '90 HITS & MISSES

No one can pretend that Italia '90 produced a football feast. Much of it was mediocre. Instead it will be remembered for its drama with penalties resolving both semi-final ties; for Argentina's remarkable progress despite themselves; for the emergence of "Toto" Schillaci; for the African confirmation provided by Cameroon's incredible progress; for England's best-ever "away" finish.

These finals were supposed to be about super teams and superstars. And superstars there were in abundance. The trouble was, many did not live up to their reputations. Three obvious failures spring to mind: Marco van Basten, Emilio Butragueno and Ruben Sosa.

What about Diego Maradona and Ruud Gullit, the game's great heroes?

Maradona, performing as a lone striker, was soon being trodden on to such an extent that one ankle virtually swelled to double its size. He played against Brazil in intense pain. Yet he still managed to deliver the decisive pass for Claudio Caniggia's winning goal.

As for Gullit, he paid the penalty of more than a year out of the game. But with each succeeding display you could see his route to rehabilitation.

The other big-news injury victim was Gianluca Vialli, whose side-lining gave Italy manager Azeglio Vicini the excuse to give young Roberto Baggio his head ...with results we all know. Baggio is a great talent, but his solo goal against Czechoslovakia, though magnificent, was not in the Maradona '86 class.

West Germany provided one of the finals' outstanding midfielders in skipper Lothar Matthaus, but Italy, in Giuseppe Giannini, possessed the most skilled and creative general. Belgium's Enzo Scifo, Colombia's Carlos Valderrama and Yugoslavia's Dragan Stojkovic remained among that peripheral group of talented but tantalising individuals who constantly promised more than they delivered, while England's Paul Gascoigne was the revelation.

The best attacking partnership was West Germany's Rudi Voller and Jurgen Klinsmann. Their hard work, the miles they ran, the way they pulled defences around was exemplary modern football.

Keir Radnedge

in ***FOCUS***

Francois Omam-Biyik sensationally scores the winner for nine-man Cameroon against holders Argentina in the opening game, plus England's "revelation" Gazza

German justice

Franz Beckenbauer made history at Italia '90, as Maradona and his Argentine team-mates spoiled the big occasion

Simply, it was the right result. West Germany were the best team in the 1990 World Cup finals and they were, by a long way, better than a sorry bunch of ill-assorted Argentines on the big night in Rome.

The Franz Beckenbauer legend thus expands still further. *Der Kaiser* is the first man to have captained and managed a World Cup-winning side. Not that this victory was as pretty a sight as West Germany's 2-1 defeat of the Netherlands in Munich in 1974.

We had to endure a "phoney war" first half, two Argentines sent off in the second – Pedro Monzon and Gustavo Dezotti thus creating final history – and the decisive goal arriving courtesy of a highly-contentious penalty.

A World Cup, which had seen plenty of drama but not a lot of outstanding football, thus ended with probably the final it deserved.

As Beckenbauer's star continued to rise so Diego Maradona failed to rise to the occasion. He has to withstand enormous personal derision everywhere he goes and plays. Yet he does not help himself. No sooner had he tearfully received his runners-up medal than he walked straight on down out of sight to the dressing rooms.

Happily, most of his team-mates – including the likes of Sergio Batista and several others who had been manhandled away from referee Edgardo Codesal at the final whistle – stayed to watch the end of the ceremonials and applaud their West German conquerors.

This World Cup has had its heroes: Lothar Matthaus, Salvatore "Toto" Schillaci, Paul Gascoigne and Roger Milla among them. But it fell to Andy Brehme to write his name into the

***Deutschland uber alles*...worthy world champions**

record books with the penalty goal in – again, appropriately – the lowest-scoring final of all time.

Those who live by the penalty shall die by the penalty, it seems. Argentina had scraped their way to the final with immense guts, agreed, but a lot of luck. They were temperamentally indisciplined; that's why they missed four players in the final and that's why they had two more sent off. And, ultimately, that's why they lost their world crown. The final does not always produce the right winner. This one did.

This was a final which aroused all the elements of great drama – not to be confused with great football. Maradona and West Germany skipper Matthaus had faced each other man for man in this same final four years earlier. Then Matthaus had been the marker. Now that role had passed on down the line: the question now was not so much who would mark Maradona as who would mark Matthaus. In the event, Argentina just marked zones in midfield.

No final had ever been repeated before and the Argentines took the circumstances, cautiously, as a good omen remembering 1986.

If anything Beckenbauer had an embarrassment of riches from which to choose in midfield. He opted to use Pierre Littbarski and Thomas Hassler to attack the Argentines on the flanks and left out Olaf Thon and Uwe Bein.

Carlos Bilardo, of course, had his team virtually selected for him by the suspensions of key midfielders Julio Olarticoechea and Ricardo Giusti, flying forward Claudio Caniggia and the lumbering Batista.

On the face of it Bilardo was at a disadvantage with new players; yet on the plus side, at the end of a long tough competition he was the one with the fresher players. The trouble was, in terms of ability, they were just not World Cup final class.

The first half was a passionless affair as if both sets of players were a little intimidated by the occasion. Argentina marked man-for-man at the back with Jose Serrizuela on Rudi Voller and Oscar Ruggeri on Jurgen Klinsmann. But the play was too one-sided to be even a satisfactory contest.

The question was just, when would West Germany score? Or, more intriguing as time went on, was it Argentina's intention to kill the match and take us, yet again, to penalties?

The Germans had plenty of first-half chances. Four fell to Voller. Once he sliced over the top, once he headed too high, once he delayed his shot and another header flew off target as well.

If Argentina were not always happy in dealing with angled centres across the face of their goal, they had Brehme summed up more successfully.

Whenever the Germans won a free-kick near goal the Argentines were quickly out to block the German left-back's drives. Not one bothered goalkeeper Sergio Goycochea and Littbarski's one effort flew over the bar.

By way of reply Argentina managed the pitiful contribution of one first-half goal attempt and that was a chipped Maradona free-kick which flew high over the bar. If anything, German keeper Bodo Illgner was more worried about one of Brehme's back-passes a few minutes later which bounced awkwardly.

Maradona was moving more actively than in any previous match in odd contrast to the German strikers, Voller and Klinsmann, who were not seeking space with anything like the eagerness of early games. That was the penalty, of course, of fatigue.

But it also appeared that Voller was still feeling the right-knee nerve injury which had led to his early departure in the semi-final against England.

West Germany maintained their total domination in the second half and the tackling and physical harassment became tougher and sharper.

Littbarski, Thomas Berthold, Voller and Brehme all went close and Klaus Augenthaler might well have been awarded a penalty when he was tripped by Goycochea in an incident which almost ended in an Argentine own goal.

As time drifted on so the Germans began to lose their attacking cohesion. The expulsion of Monzon for an awful foul on Klinsmann was justified. But that was no gift for the Germans. We had seen throughout these finals how teams appeared sometimes to play better with ten men (or nine, in Cameroon's case) than with 11.

Just as that first expulsion had been, sadly, on the cards, so it was not surprising that the match was decided by a dubious penalty. Replays appeared to show Roberto Nestor Sensini playing the ball rather than the man but Voller fell and the referee pointed to the spot.

Brehme's kick only narrowly defeated the intuition of Goycochea. And then, the Germans' decision to play out time led directly to the expulsion of Dezotti, who had already been booked.

As time ran out for Maradona, Bilardo and Argentina so Beckenbauer permitted himself a grin of delight.

Deutschland uber alles, worthy world champions.

Keir Radnedge

This was a final *which aroused all the elements of* **great drama – not great football**

ABOVE: Argentine disappointment... Maradona and Co. failed to perform in the final

TOP: History-maker...Franz Beckenbauer

THE FINAL

July 8, 1990 – Rome, Attendance: 73,603

WEST GERMANY 1-0 ARGENTINA

Brehme 85 pen

Team: Illgner – Berthold (Reuter 73), Buchwald, Augenthaler, Kohler, Brehme – Hassler, Matthaus, Littbarski – Voller, Klinsmann.
Coach: Franz Beckenbauer

Team: Goycochea – Serrizuela, Simon, Ruggeri (Monzon 46) – Basualdo, Burruchaga (Calderon 53), Lorenzo, Troglio, Sensini – Maradona, Dezotti.
Coach: Carlos Bilardo

1990
World Champions
WEST GERMANY

Spotlight on Schillaci

How six-goal Sicilian Salvatore "Toto" Schillaci made World Cup history. By Keir Radnedge

Salvatore Schillaci emerged sensationally at the 1990 World Cup. He is not a great footballer but he is very quick, brave, direct and fearless. All old-fashioned qualities, but found in very few of the attackers at Italia '90.

Forwards were a real area of confusion at the finals. Some teams used a winger, some ignored wingers. Some used forwards not to score goals but to lay the ball off for midfield men coming through to look after the goalscoring. But not Italy. They used their forwards to strike for goal...and strike for goal Schillaci did.

"Toto" was thrilled to become an overnight hero, surprised by his top-scoring success and amazed at the instant adulation his six goals inspired.

Italian president Francesco Cossiga was fascinated by Schillaci's eyes which appeared on the verge of popping out of his head when he celebrated his goals against Austria, Czechoslovakia, Uruguay, Republic of Ireland, Argentina and England.

Schillaci told him: "I don't know why my eyes look like that in the pictures or on television. But it's all right...they go back to normal after a match!"

In truth, away from the penalty box, back on the training ground, in the team hotel or on the team bus, Schillaci's eyes contain far more suspicion than charisma. Then you see not the wealthy modern hero but the unmistakable ghost of the boy from the deep south, from the wrong side of the tracks.

Schillaci squeezed into one of the last remaining gaps in Italy's World Cup squad, having made his *Azzurri* debut earlier this spring against Switzerland. But anyone who thought he was there merely for the ride was not listening closely enough.

The day before the World Cup finals began Giampiero Boniperti, recently departed president of Juventus who then became the national team's World Cup delegation chief, told anyone who cared to hear: "We need another Rossi. But have you seen Schillaci? He's become a sort of favourite kid brother with the other players. Keep an eye on him..."

That was a piece of advice Austria failed to hear or heed. Schillaci appeared as a second-half substitute for the off-target Andrea Carnevale and, three minutes later, headed the decisive goal.

Schillaci says: "It was like a miracle. Vialli deserves the credit. It was a great cross...and I had thought I was not going to get a game. Vicini told me to warm up. But then Baresi was injured and I thought: He'll put on Vierchowod and then he won't dare use another substitute. I've lost my chance. But then Baresi signalled to the bench that he was OK – and I was on!"

A custom, particularly in soccer's Latin countries, is for a player to "dedicate" his goals – and Schillaci is no exception. His goal against Austria was a special one. "I wanted to dedicate the goal to everyone," he says, "but in the end I realised there were special people: my neighbours and friends where I was born and brought up in Palermo, and then to my wife who was expecting our second child."

***Azzurri* hero... Schillaci was the top goalscorer and Golden Ball winner at Italia '90**

Schillaci's home city of Palermo went collectively wild as soon as the match had ended. And Domenico, Schillaci's father, was carried shoulder-high through the streets by friends and relatives.

Schillaci's appearance as substitute again, against the United States in Italy's second game, did enough to earn him a place in the starting XI for the Italians' third game, against Czechoslovakia.

Nine minutes into that game and it was Toto who opened the scoring. By now his wife Rita had given birth to their son, Mattia, and it was to the latest Schillaci that this goal was dedicated.

There was plenty more goals – and glory – to come. Schillaci scored the 64th-minute breakthrough goal against Uruguay in the second round; he scored the lone decider after 38 minutes of the quarter-final against the Republic of Ireland, and he snapped up a rebound for the 17th-minute goal which sent Italy into the semi-final lead against Argentina.

But, with cruel timing, fatigue and a muscle strain began to wear Schillaci down. Unusually he was several times caught wearily offside. And, when it came to the penalty shootout, coach Vicini did not think Schillaci fit enough to take a kick.

Certainly he could not have achieved less than luckless Roberto Donadoni or Aldo Serena. But that is history.

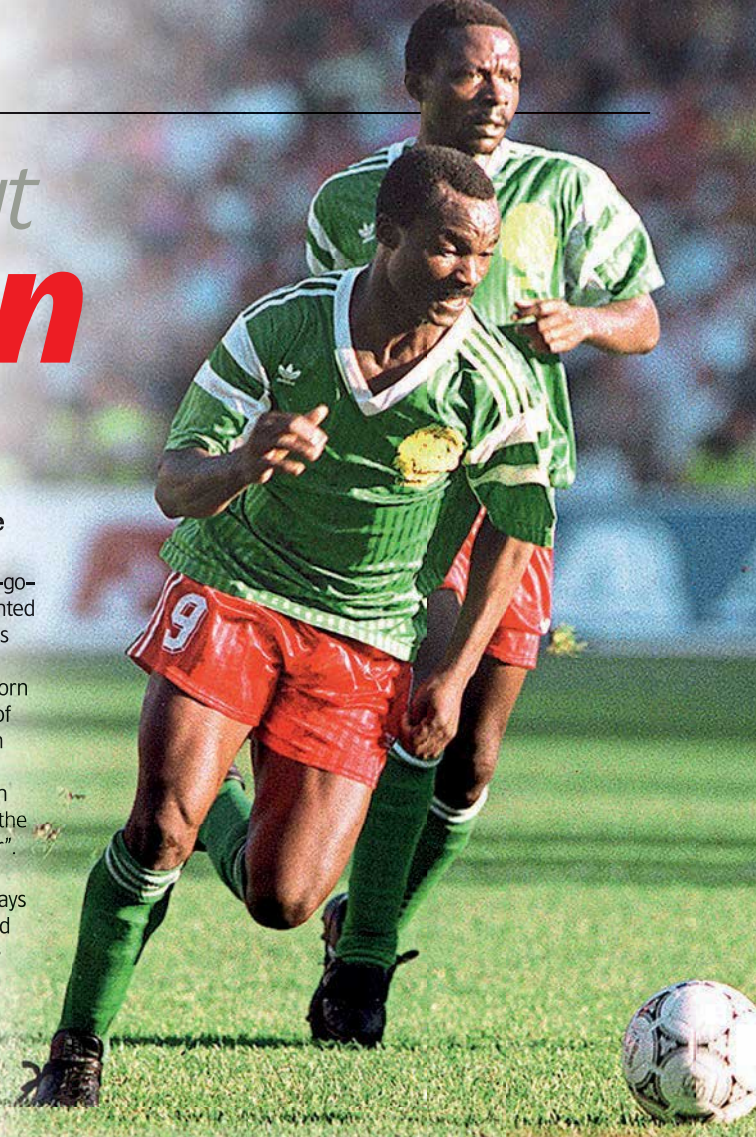
In the shattering aftermath Schillaci recalled his stock reply to all the earlier flattery: "I'm not Paolo Rossi. Maybe I'm the same height and maybe I've got similar acceleration. But that's all. He was one of the greats. He won the World Cup..."

That dream was denied Schillaci. But it was the third-place play-off against England which, of course, established his place in the history books. He pulled himself together, created Roberto Baggio's controversial first Italy goal then struck the winner himself from, ironically, the penalty spot.

Not that Schillaci was first choice to take the penalty. Baggio had been singled out by Vicini in training. But when referee Joel Quiniou pointed to the spot after Schillaci himself had been tripped, Baggio said: "Toto, you take it. I want you to be the top scorer."

The man who put Cameroon on the map

How super striker Roger Milla opened up the World Cup for Africa. By Keir Radnedge



Magic Milla...the striker helped Cameroon achieve Africa's then best-ever finish at a World Cup finals

The 1990 World Cup will not be remembered for the technique or brilliance of the football on display. It will, however, be remembered for the sheer drama and for the projection of some remarkable characters.

None were more remarkable than Roger Milla, the 38-year-old Cameroon striker who can boast a place in soccer history. He is the oldest man ever to have scored a goal at the World Cup – overtaking Sweden's Gunnar Gren, who was 37 when he shot home against West Germany in the 1958 semi-finals.

Milla was the man who appeared as a second-half substitute to transform Cameroon's matches. He was the man whose two late goals overturned Romania; the man whose opportunism destroyed Colombia's reckless goalkeeper Rene Higuita; and it was Milla, having shaved his head, who came very close to upsetting England in that never-to-be-forgotten quarter-final in Naples.

Cameroon came to the World Cup finals dreaming of being acclaimed as the "African Brazil." Who else then, but Milla, would have dared take the Mickey out of Brazil's star striker, Careca, by emulating his jig with the corner flag on scoring a goal?

Now Milla can look back with pride. He says: "We were very disappointed to lose against England. We believed we played the better football in that quarter-final. Perhaps we were too tired. Perhaps we did not concentrate quite hard enough in the closing stages.

"But that is behind us now. Looking back we are all happy that we made people all round the world take notice of Cameroon.

"Personally, it was a fantastic experience. Even better than 1982. It was all new for me then. This time I could appreciate a little more all we had achieved. Also, I appreciated more this time just what it meant for Cameroon and our people. They celebrated every goal with us."

Yet, all is not as it seems. Cameroon were not the happy-go-lucky squad they had been painted and as for Milla, well, "Milla" was not even his real name.

The genie of Italia '90 was born Albert Roger Mooh Miller, son of a railway worker with a German connection on May 20, 1952. Friends believe that, rather than Miller the original name which the family appropriated was "Muller". No matter. Milla was born to a family of four brothers, has always remained close to his family and homeland, and might well have been sitting at home with them watching the World Cup on television instead.

Two years ago he retired from the national team. He was bitter and furious over events surrounding his mother's death while he was away playing for Cameroon against Saudi Arabia in the Afro-Asia Cup.

He says: "Our directors at the federation told me I was not to worry. That while I was away they would take care of everything. Instead, when I got back, my was mother dead. Not only had no one taken any care over her but they would not even pay the hospital bills. I was bitter and angry and so sad. After that I didn't want anything more to do with the national team."

It took the personal intervention of Cameroon state president, Paul Biya, an old acquaintance, to persuade Milla to change his mind. President Biya and officials of the Sports Ministry decided that Milla's experience – after starring at the 1982 World Cup finals in Spain – would be of enormous value to his team-mates at Italia '90.

Not all of those team-mates agreed. But all his years of experience did indeed bring that vital extra degree to the Cameroon game. As managers insist, particularly at international level: "It's a 13-man game now. The substitutes are just as important as the players who start the game."

And so it proved with Milla. Not that his eventual role had been foreseen by anyone. Officials and team-mates, media and supporters, all believed Milla was present in Italy merely to let his voice of experience be heard in the dressing room and training camp. Milla thought so, too. The one man who did not was Cameroon's Soviet coach, Valery Nepomnyashchy.

It was Nepomnyashchy's decision to use Milla as he did. Nobody else. And without Milla's goals Cameroon would not have achieved all that they did.

Milla claims to have scored more than 1,000 goals in his career, but there is no documentation to support it from his spells back home with Leopard Douala and Tonnerre Yaounde, then in France with Valenciennes, Monaco, Bastia, Saint-Etienne and Montpellier, and laterly Jeunesse Saint-Pierroise, a team from the French island of Reunion off the east coast of Africa near Madagascar in the Indian Ocean.

Instead, it's his four goals at Italia '90 which will serve as a promotional vehicle not only for himself and for Cameroon, but for African football in general.

ICONIC MOMENT

WIND OF CHANGE

Finally, after all the ifs and buts, all the will-he-won't-he agonising over Diego Maradona, the Joao Havelange FIFA president sideshow, a multi-million-dollar spat among the sponsors, acres of hot air over the controversial host nation...let's get down to the football.

This, in case you have forgotten it, is what the World Cup finals are all about; some 528 footballers, bound head to toe in hype, attempting to break the bonds of over-expectation and deliver 52 matches which are ensured a place in the sport's history books.

Almost the least important issue now is the one over which most blood has been spilled: the USA as hosts. In a few frantic weeks the circus will move on. But what sort of a World Cup can we expect? Every finals is unique. The mix of nations is always different. The balance of power tilts one way then another. The key players vary. But the 1994 finals will be especially unique.

Rule changes approved by FIFA (the awarding of three points for a group-stage win and the implementation of the back-pass rule) have been employed to encourage attacking football and counter the low-scoring and defensive nature of matches at Italia '90.

And in historic terms, Russia will appear as a separate nation for the first time following the break-up of the Soviet Union, while a unified Germany will take part in the tournament for the first time since 1938.

The finals were awarded to the US in particular circumstances: a one-off effort to attack a resistant soccer market and help provide the dynamic to establish a professional culture and a new league (MLS) which will last.

Such a context adds complication to the usual success or failure equation. World Cups are usually judged on two levels. The first is: were the finals an organisational, commercial and financial success? The second, and most enduring, is: were they a technical success i.e. did they produce football of quality with drama and excitement to sear the memory? Now also, the game will need to judge whether 1994 will have achieved its missionary goal.

Keir Radnedge

in **FOCUS**

Bulgaria's Yordan Letchkov scores his iconic diving header to knock Germany out in the quarter-finals at the Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey

Brazil spot on, Baggio agony

Brazil won their fourth World Cup crown as the final was decided by penalties for the first time in its history

Each World Cup is distinctive in its own way. Each, in the immediacy of the live action, bears the personality of the host nation but then lives on in the memory through the quality and drama of the football (or lack of it).

Conflicting verdicts were there in abundance after the US experience. Predictably, most American observers who had never seen a soccer match before, let alone the pinnacle of the game, called it the greatest World Cup ever.

Such judgements, built on sand, were worthless. A coterie of European football intellectuals – or those who would like to consider themselves as such – dismissed USA '94 as an over-hyped funfair, lacking class or any touch with "football reality."

Such judgements were typical evidence of European insularity and built, in many cases, on little more by way of foundation than their own nations' failures, either in the qualifiers or in the finals.

Truth, as ever, lies somewhere down the middle.

The introduction of three points for a win and the positive changes of interpretation over offside plus the insistence on outlawing the tackle from behind when the man is played before the ball (which is the key element and has never been a matter of dispute within the Laws of the Game) were all highly positive.

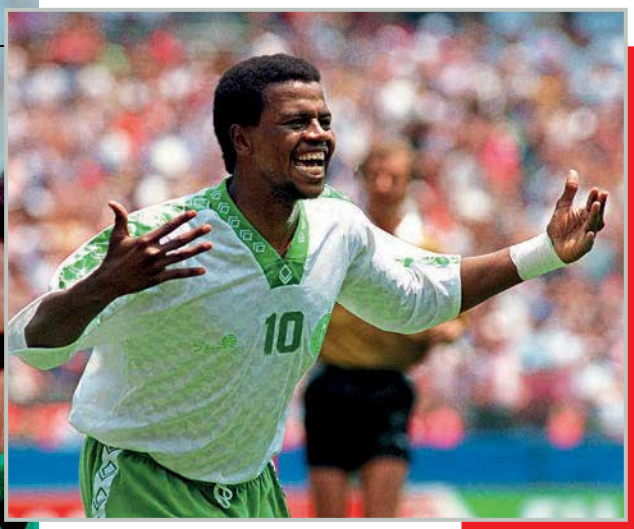
The back-pass "ban" also helped significantly in raising the amount of "real time" in a game to around 62 minutes. That is good for fans and for the game at a time when so many sports are competing so much more aggressively for the attention of public, broadcasters and sponsors.

In terms of moments on the pitch that will live long in the memory (for good or bad), like every World Cup, USA '94 had its fair share. The final itself was a drab affair but what will forever be imprinted on people's minds is Roberto Baggio's look of utter despair after blazing over the crossbar the decisive penalty in the shootout.

Before the final, there were more positive memories – Russia striker Oleg Salenko scoring a record five goals in one game in the 6-1 thrashing of

Romario...the 1994 World Cup's outstanding player

Agony...Roberto Baggio after missing the decisive spot-kick



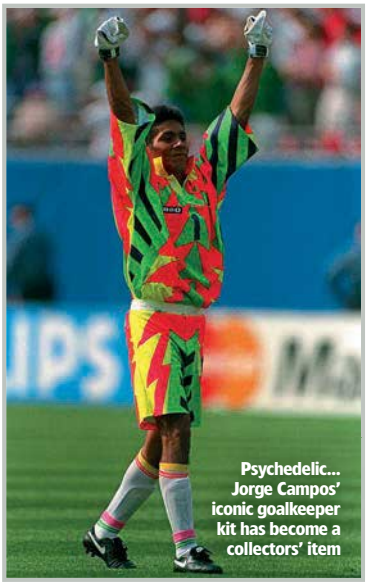
ABOVE: Wondergoal ...Saudi Arabia ace Saeed Al Owairan celebrates his solo stunner v Belgium

LEFT: Record breaker...Russia's Oleg Salenko hit five goals past Cameroon

Cameroon; Republic of Ireland's shock win over Italy thanks to Ray Houghton's iconic lob; Saeed Al Owairan's wonderful solo goal for Saudi Arabia against the Belgians; Yordan Letchkov's diving header to knock out the defending champions Germany; and Mexico keeper Jorge Campos' eye-catching (or rather eye-watering) attire.

However, in the end, the 1994 World Cup – with all its fanfare and, in the final, against the backdrop of the awe-inspiring Rose Bowl stadium in Pasadena, California – went out not with a bang but a whimper. A flurry of quite irrelevant penalties gave victory to a far from brilliant Brazilian team who probably, overall, with the one great player at the finals in Romario, deserved it.

*In the end, the 1994 World Cup – **with all its fanfare** – went out not with a bang **but a whimper***



Psychedelic... Jorge Campos' iconic goalkeeper kit has become a collectors' item

THE FINAL

July 17, 1994 – Pasadena, Attendance: 94,194 *AET; Brazil won 3-2 on penalties*

BRAZIL 0-0 ITALY

Team: Taffarel – Jorginho (Cafu 21), Aldair, Marcio Santos, Branco – Mazinho, Mauro Silva, Dunga, Zinho (Viola 106) – Bebeto, Romario.
Coach: Carlos Alberto Parreira

Team: Pagliuca – Mussi (Apolloni 35), Baresi, Maldini, Benarrivo – Berti, D. Baggio (Evani 95), Albertini, Donadoni – R. Baggio, Massaro.
Coach: Arrigo Sacchi

Football, drugs and El Dorado

Tim Vickery remembers Francisco Maturana's Colombia, the team that threatened to reshape the international landscape at the turn of the 1990s

Key man...Colombia's Carlos Valderrama

For a brief spell in the late 1980s and early 1990s it seemed that El Dorado was real after all. Glistening in their yellow shirts, Colombia played like exuberant ambassadors for the mythical golden city that had gripped the imagination of European colonisers. Their football sparkled and glittered, but when some were convinced they were on the gilded path, it crumbled to dust.

Much of the story takes place between two goals from centre-back Andres Escobar. In May 1988 his header earned the team a well-deserved 1-1 draw with England at Wembley during their first European tour. Their excellent performance confirmed the promise shown when coming third in the previous year's Copa America, and it was seen as the moment that the team came of age.

Six years later they had come so far that many judges, Pele included, rated them among the favourites for the 1994 World Cup. It seemed perfectly justified but would prove to be too much too soon. Escobar's own goal against the United States, the hosts, ensured that Colombia would be the first team eliminated from the competition, and defeat turned into tragedy when he was assassinated in Medellin ten days later.

These were the years when Colombia was in the grip of the cocaine cartels. Fuelled by drug money, the cities of Cali and Medellin boomed, and the cartels did as they pleased amassing untold fortunes – and one of the things they spent their money on was football. Domestic standards soared as star foreigners flooded in, especially to America, who won five national titles in a row from 1982 to 1986.

Medellin clubs hit back by taking a different path. Atletico Nacional responded to the challenge by resolving to pick only Colombian players. And so well did it work that their manager Francisco Maturana also took over the national team, holding both posts in the late 1980s.

In 1989 Nacional became the first Colombian winners of the Copa Libertadores. The club also provided most of the personnel and the philosophy of the national team.

Colombia were out of step with the traditional South American giants. Argentina won the 1986 World Cup defending with a sweeper and two stoppers, and Brazil followed their lead. But Maturana used a flat back four, with long-haired keeper Rene Higuita as sweeper. Higuita was years ahead of his time in terms of his ability with his feet and willingness to take responsibility 40 metres from goal. In 1990, Maturana wrote: "He gives us something no one else has, and we take full advantage. With Rene as sweeper, we have 11 outfield players."

Maturana's teams marked zonally and sought to reduce the space available to the opposition by putting pressure on the ball. "For our team to stay compact," the coach wrote, "we have a norm of 15 metres between our lines [defence, midfield, attack], with the position of the ball as reference." This enabled Colombia to squeeze the opposition while also ensuring that their own players were sufficiently close together for their characteristic tip-tap short-passing game – in which the key man was Carlos Valderrama.

The frizzy-haired midfielder was accused of being slow, but few players have ever moved the ball so deftly. It seemed that Valderrama was always in possession, but before he could be closed down the ball had gone, and he was off to receive it and kiss off his next cleverly angled pass. Valderrama

dictated a rhythm as hypnotic as the salsa music that was the team's constant soundtrack.

The style of play found its perfect home in Barranquilla, the Caribbean port that became Colombia's base. Their possession game wore down the opposition, a process hastened by the sweltering heat and the huge pitch in the newly-built Estadio Metropolitano.

INTENSE RIVALRIES

Barranquilla also had the advantage of taking the team away from intense regional rivalries. Bogota and Cali would snipe that Maturana's was a Medellin team. But on the coast, they were everyone's. They made a point of being accessible. "As you live, so you play," Maturana said. "If we are surrounded with affection, the chances of performing better are improved."

And with Valderrama flanked by two athletic attacking midfielders, Bernardo Redin and the emerging Freddy Rincon, Colombia performed well at Italia '90, especially in their final group game, when they bamboozled eventual winners West Germany. But disaster struck in the second round tie against Cameroon. The Colombians were a goal down in extra-time when the ball was played to Higuita well outside his area. Seconds after Colombia's television commentator described him as "an exceptional sweeper", Higuita was robbed by a swooping Roger Milla, who raced away to score what proved to be the winning goal. "It was a mistake as big as a house," the keeper said.

But further progress would have been difficult with the lack of top-class strikers. This deficiency was soon ended with the emergence of the unusual, long-striding Faustino Asprilla and the powerful Adolfo "Train" Valencia. Both played a magnificent role in Colombia's champagne moment, a 5-0 win away to Argentina in September 1993 which sealed Colombia's place at USA '94 in emphatic fashion. Colombia scored either side of half-time and it became a rout after the third went in with 17 minutes to go.

DANGEROUS SITUATION

It was Colombia's 20th game unbeaten. The run was extended to 28, ended by a 1-0 defeat by Bolivia in April 1994. But they then won their next five games without conceding a goal and went to the USA with their status among the favourites confirmed. For a country that had never won anything, it was a dangerous situation.

As Maturana's assistant, Hernan Dario Gomez, later pointed out, Colombia could beat anyone outside the conditions of a World Cup. Inside the pressure bubble it was a different story. The team, feted and fawned upon by their public and sponsors, swanned around like champions-elect – until all the hubris was pricked in the opening game.

Colombia played some attractive football against Romania in Pasadena. But where they had counter-attacked so well against Argentina, this time they were taken apart on the break by Gheorghe Hagi and company, going down 3-1.

The country's ills came pouring out after the Romania defeat. Even before Italia '90 the team had been receiving threats from betting syndicates allied to the drug cartels, but now it was much more serious. Being in the global spotlight had raised the stakes. Perhaps the death a few months earlier of Pablo Escobar, infamous boss of the Medellin cartel, had increased their vulnerability.

Asprilla recalled that before the now-crucial game against the USA: "Maturana came in crying like a baby. He said to midfielder Barrabas Gomez: 'You can't play. If you play they'll kill you, me, everyone.' We all ran to our rooms to call home. Our families had guards outside the door.

"During the anthem I looked around the crowd looking for someone aiming at me. I really thought I'd be shot."

Unsurprisingly, the team struggled to string two passes together. Straining to cut out a cross Andres Escobar turned the ball into his own net and put Colombia on the way to a 2-1 defeat that left them with no chance of making the second round.

With nothing at stake they beat Switzerland 2-0 in the last group game. Valderrama and company really were much better than what their World Cup performances demonstrated – as they showcased a year later when beating the United States 4-1 to finish third at the Copa America. But their World Cup adventure was over prematurely, and soon so was Escobar's life.

ABOVE: Andres Escobar...Colombia fans pay tribute to the slain star

ABOVE LEFT: Colombia coach... Francisco Maturana

Sweeper-keeper... Higuita attempts to atone for his error at Italia '90

ICONIC MOMENT

BIGGER, BUT BETTER?

The last World Cup of the century. The biggest. The first with the golden goal rule. Also the richest, the most hyped, the most watched – with a worldwide television audience of billions.

Being the biggest does not mean it will necessarily be the best. The more sides you allow in the lower the common denominator in terms of quality.

At least the expansion to 32 teams will sharpen up the drama in the first round. Only the top two teams from each group will go forward to the knockout stages, meaning it is no longer enough to seek, negatively, to draw all your matches and sneak through as a third-placed team.

Football's showpiece event has become gargantuan. The Olympics may take over cities and last almost as long, and every other sport has jumped on the bandwagon and organised its own world championship. But nothing compares, in terms of concentrated global passion, with soccer's fiesta every four years.

This is the second time France has played host. But whereas the first French World Cup, in 1938, took place beneath the shadow of oncoming World War, the 1998 finals will explode in happy juxtaposition to the millennium.

These finals thus carry the weighty responsibility of setting the tone for soccer going into the 21st century. More particularly, the world's greatest players (Shearer, Baggio, Zidane, Batistuta, Raul, Salas, et al.) have been left in no doubt that they carry the responsibility on their shoulders. And there is no greater sporting occasion than at the World Cup.

The smart money is on Brazil striker Ronaldo to step into the limelight. Twice FIFA World Footballer of the Year, he says he wants to break Just Fontaine's record of 13 goals, set in 1958. That is unlikely. But opponents may well spend so much time and effort thwarting his ambition that his team-mates will capitalise on the extra time and space to do the damage instead.

Brazil, in 1958 in Sweden, became the first nation to win the World Cup outside their continent. Forty years on, history may be about to repeat itself.

Keir Radnedge

in **FOCUS**

Netherlands talisman Dennis Bergkamp scores one of the World Cup's great goals – a stunning 90th-minute winner against Argentina in the quarter-finals in Marseille

Le magnifique

France overwhelm sorry Brazil in Paris to finally reach the summit

France woke up with the happiest of hangovers on Monday, July 13. It was not "just" that *Les Bleus* had become only the seventh nation in history to win the World Cup; it was not "just" that they had deprived holders Brazil of the cup in their magnificent Stade de France. They are now no longer the entertaining nearly men of world football.

Zinedine Zidane became the first man to score twice in normal time in a final since Brazil's own Pele and Vava 40 years ago. It was France's first final appearance, in their second hosting of the event. They now stand alongside Italy and Germany as the only nations to have won both World Cup and European Championship.

And they did it all against Brazil – of whose football the French had so long been in awe. They thrashed them, they played them into the realms of chaos, confusion and recrimination.

It was proof that a coach such as Aime Jacquet did not need public charisma to make his mark, and it was a success for the French nation as a whole, which had embraced the World Cup in remarkable spirit.

World champions ...Zinedine Zidane lifts the World Cup

This was Brazil's first defeat in a World Cup final proper: their failure in 1950 was in the last match of a concluding mini-league. Their players looked stunned, both at half-time and at the final whistle. Thus the names of superb players such as Dunga and Rivaldo will be interred in the annals of *Carioca* football shame, alongside the victims of 1950.

And, of course, there was Ronaldo. His name was absent from the team sheet first issued to the media. A correction, with Ronaldo in place, soon followed. Then we heard that he had not trained for two days and had reported fit only 45 minutes before kick-off. But match fit? He was not. And one wonders what effect that knowledge had on Brazilian morale and confidence.

The minor tragedy of Ronaldo summed up Brazil on the day. Ever since the opening game in the Stade de France – a 2-1 win over Scotland – it had been clear that they had problems in central defence. Coach Mario Zagallo's failure to recognise or resolve that weakness during France '98 will cost him his job.

Junior Baiano, at the heart of what one may laughingly call a defence, gave the worst performance by any player in any modern World Cup final. He and Brazil were spared massive humiliation only because striker Stephane Guivarc'h responded with the most dire example of finishing in a modern final.

France began as dynamically as if they were back in the first round and playing the minnows of South Africa and Saudi Arabia all over again, moving the ball quickly and fluently. Three minutes were all they needed to open a chasm between Junior Baiano and Aldair. Youri Djorkaeff and Zidane strung together swift, accurate passes, and, suddenly, Guivarc'h was clear. The shock of finding the goal yawning before him seemed too much. He checked his stride as Junior Baiano stole the ball off his toes and collapsed in pain, wounded more by the realisation that he should have scored.

Brazil, the country with the greatest experience of winning World Cup finals, took a full 20 minutes to make any sort of impression on the French defence. This said plenty about Marcel Desailly and Co. and about the coherence of the Brazilian attack, or lack of it.

ABOVE: A tale of two team sheets ...the mystery of Ronaldo's absence

ABOVE LEFT: Zizou double...heading home his second goal from a corner

Even then, Brazil had to rely on a set-piece as Rivaldo saw a header well held by Fabien Barthez after a corner from Leonardo. That, remarkably, was all they could manage.

Ronaldo? Nothing.

France were commanding, dictating, forcing mistakes. Roberto Carlos nervily conceded a corner on the French right, Emmanuel Petit curled it to the near post, and Zidane towered above Leonardo to head home.

The match thus entered its decisive stage. France needed to secure their grip, not necessarily by scoring another goal but by pressing Brazil in midfield, by denying a service to their strikers and by harassing defenders, who were already struggling to make a match of it.

Junior Baiano was booked for fouling the hypercharged Djorkaeff, who then sliced through the defence only to finish with a weak shot which Claudio Taffarel gathered comfortably.

France began to suffer from over-confidence. Desailly was lucky to escape a booking for a tackle from behind on Bebeto, Deschamps was booked for a foul on Rivaldo then Desailly lost a looping cross from Leonardo and was "saved" by Bebeto's weak header.

France redoubled their attacking efforts. Christian Karembeu's optimistic effort cannoned off Junior Baiano's legs to Petit, who was so surprised to find the goal at his mercy that he missed the target. Then came another desperate miss. Lilian Thuram's through pass was totally misjudged by Junior Baiano, leaving Guivarc'h clear...to shoot weakly enough for Taffarel to save for a corner.

Jacquet was now growing impatient for a second goal. In first-half overtime he got his wish. A corner, on the left this time, was taken by Djorkaeff, and Zidane stooped to direct his header past Taffarel. Half-time, and 2-0 was more than France had hoped, more than the nation had expected, more than Brazil could believe.

The interval was vital for the coaches. Jacquet had to remind his men that the job was only half done. Zagallo had to find an instant cure for shellshock.

He sent on Denilson in place of Leonardo, but Denilson is a solo artist, not a conductor to draw the orchestra together. In one substitution, Zagallo displayed both his desperation and the weakness of his hand.

Desailly was soon booked as France resisted an attack. Ronaldo blew his one and only chance as the falling Barthez stopped, and held, his close-range drive.

Barthez had been one of the French heroes, remarkable considering the manner in which he had been pilloried a year ago after Le Tournoi, when his blunder handed victory to England after he had been demoralised by *that* free-kick from Roberto Carlos. No such free-kicks now from Brazil's left-back, but Barthez still contributed one moment of encouragement to Brazil.

On the hour he rushed wildly from goal, missed a cross and turned in time to see Bebeto's volley steered off the line by Desailly.

For Brazil, that was the decisive moment. The self-confidence visibly drained from their game. When Cafu's error left Guivarc'h through, Brazil stopped, awaiting the inevitable. But the inevitable, for France, was that Guivarc'h, yet again, missed. The miss of the match, if not the entire World Cup. Just a few moments later he was replaced, and not before time, by Christophe Dugarry.

Referee Said Belqola, until then a mere spectator, then offered his own contribution to the fun by sending off Desailly, who tripped Cafu in Brazil's half. It was a second bookable offence and, as soon as former Milan soon-to-be Chelsea defender saw the referee's hand go to his pocket, he turned on his heel headed for the touchline.

Brazil could not seize the opportunity. They launched individual raids without conviction. France pulled Petit back into Desailly's place and withdrew all but Dugarry so as to squeeze the air out of the corridor between midfield and defence.

Ronaldo's impotence was revealed in his sad anonymity. He was receiving no service, and did not know where to go to find it. Edmundo appeared in place of the pedestrian Cesar Sampaio, to no avail, but France's introduction of Dugarry and then Patrick Vieira for Djorkaeff brought due reward.

Three minutes into overtime, Dugarry sprang the breakaway trap with a raid which ended with Vieira feeding Petit to score the third goal. Seconds later it was all over.

France, the country whose pioneers launched first FIFA and then the World Cup, were the new world champions. Not, they would say, before time.

Keir Radnedge

The minor tragedy of Ronaldo** summed up Brazil...his impotence was **revealed in his anonymity

THE FINAL

July 12, 1998 – Saint-Denis, Attendance: 75,000

FRANCE 3-0 BRAZIL

Zidane 27, 45+1, Petit 90+3

Team: Barthez - Thuram, Desailly, Leboeuf, Lizarazu – Karembeu (Boghossian 57), Deschamps, Petit – Zidane – Djorkaeff (Vieira 74), Guivarc'h (Dugarry 66). **Coach:** Aime Jacquet

Team: Taffarel – Cafu, Junior Baiano, Aldair, Roberto Carlos – Leonardo (Denilson 46), Dunga, Cesar Sampaio (Edmundo 73), Rivaldo – Ronaldo, Bebeto. **Coach:** Mario Zagallo

1998
World Champions
FRANCE

France '98 In Pictures

ABOVE: England wonderkid... a teenage Michael Owen on his way to scoring his memorable wondergoal versus Argentina

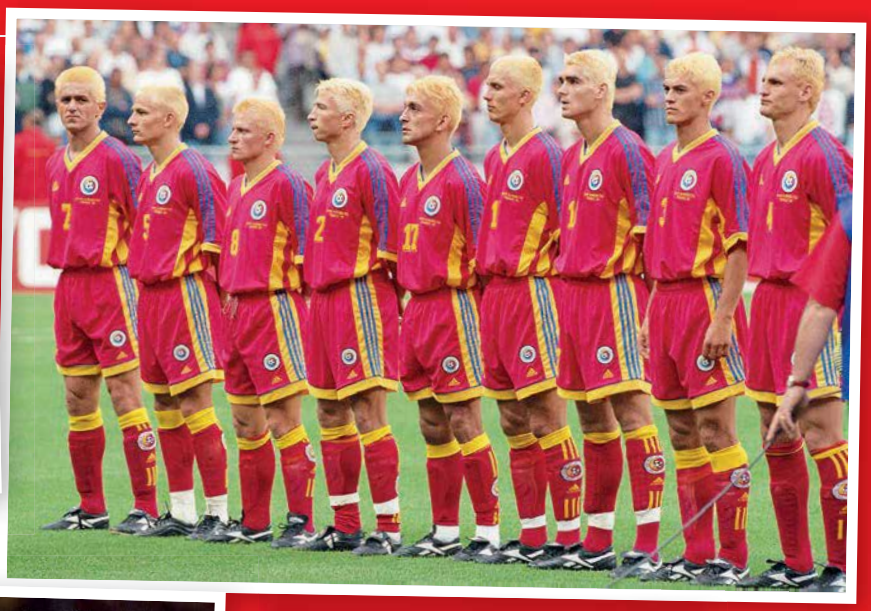
ABOVE: Debutants...Jamaica were one of four teams – along with Croatia, South Africa and Japan – to be making their World Cup debuts in 1998

ABOVE: Laid back...Brian Laudrup's goal celebration against Brazil in the quarter-finals, which they went on to lose 3-2

RIGHT: "Mother of all games"... Iran's Mehdi Mahdavikia celebrates his famous goal in the politically-charged clash against the United States

ABOVE: Golden Boot...Croatia's Davor Suker finished as the tournament's top scorer – ahead of Argentina's Gabriel Batistuta and Italy's Christian Vieri – with six goals

ABOVE: Superstition...Laurent Blanc kissing the head of Fabien Barthez became an iconic image of France '98



ABOVE: Beach blond...the entire Romania squad celebrated beating England 2-1 in the group stage by dying their hair

ABOVE: Hair-raising...Nigeria achieved their joint-best World Cup finish in 1998, but Jay-Jay Okocha and Taribo West's hairstyles also caught the attention

ABOVE: Seeing red...David Beckham received his marching orders after famously clashing with Argentina's Diego Simeone

RIGHT: Super strikeforce... Chile's Marcelo Salas and Ivan Zamorano were plying their trade in Italy's Serie A with Lazio and Internazionale respectively in 1998

ICONIC MOMENT

'BRAZIL DESERVED TO WIN'

"One year ago I would not have expected to share in such a historic night, with a fifth World Cup victory for Brazil. We had so many problems in qualifying that it was impossible to think we would succeed. Instead, after a World Cup of shocks, this may have been considered one more. Yet I believe that by the end Brazil were the most outstanding team at the finals and, above all, they had a far superior attack to everyone else.

"Ronaldinho was the individual surprise of the tournament and, of course, I was delighted with Ronaldo. It was not just that he was scoring in every match; it was his whole game, his confidence, his creative skill. Anyway, he had a mission of revenge after the sad events of 1998 and all the injuries in between.

"With his two goals in the final, Ronaldo equalled my total of 12 goals overall at the World Cup in the same number of matches but in just half the number of finals. Now that he appears, finally, to have shaken off all his injuries, I expect him to leave my record behind.

"I should also praise the contribution of Brazil's captain, Cafu. He made history as well by becoming the first player to appear in three successive World Cup finals. His experience was important, both on and off the pitch. As a World Cup-winning captain he proved himself a worthy successor to Bellini, Mauro, Carlos Alberto and Dunga.

"Finally, I want to pay credit to the co-hosts. South Korea achieved wonders under Guus Hiddink in becoming the first Asian team to reach the semi-finals. But that should not overshadow Japan's enormous progress in a far shorter space of time. Remember, they reached the second round in only their second finals. Early departees such as France, Argentina and Portugal must be humble enough to learn the lessons.

"The lesson of this World Cup was that almost any country with ambition can now be at least competitive on the international stage. That is as good for the game as Brazil being world champions again!"

Pele was talking to Keir Radnedge

in FOCUS

Ronaldinho audaciously lobs goalkeeper David Seaman with a 40-yard free-kick as Brazil knock out England 2-1 in the quarter-finals in Shizuoka, Japan

Phenomenal...Ronaldo celebrates scoring a brace against Germany in the World Cup final

Ronaldo returns in triumph

Brazil claimed their fifth World Cup as "*O Fenomeno*" erases the memories of 1998

The fireworks exploded and the paper glitz snowstormed down from the roof to salute a historic achievement, as Brazil set off on a lap of honour to celebrate their fifth World Cup win.

On a personal level it was a triumph for Ronaldo, the victim of 1998, who had returned on a mission of revenge and had scored both goals in the 2-0 defeat of a German side who had never expected to share in the final party in the Yokohama International Stadium.

Gold and green were the colours of glory, black and white the colours of what might have been. The 2002 World Cup had ended with world football's hierarchy vindicated and the shocks and upsets of the past four weeks almost a trick of the memory.

When it came down to it, when push came to shove, when reality cut in, then it was the traditional giants of South America and Europe who had taken the last curtain call. It was almost as if the passion and ecstasy of South Korea, the dynamism of Japan, had been factors in a different tournament.

When fans and football historians look back through the game's bibles they will see only Brazil beating Germany. The real tale of the first co-hosted World Cup will be enshrouded in the mists of football folklore.

Yet this first World Cup in Asia has been full of delight, not only for the home fans in South Korea and Japan but also for the record international tele-viewers. For one thing, co-hosting worked exceptionally well, despite the countries' uneasy history. For another, hooligans were conspicuous by their absence from the 20 superb, mostly new, stadia. The only snags concerned those perennially problematic issues of ticketing and refereeing standards. *Plus ça change*.

Senegal, appearing in the finals for the first time, had provided the tournament with a sensational start by defeating holders France 1-0 in the opening match in Seoul. But the final rarely threatened to surprise.

Germany, despite the absence of suspended Michael Ballack, did take the game to Brazil as the best form of defence, and it was a tactic that had the Brazilians baffled for much of the first half. However, the mental and physical concentration demanded of such a tactic is enormous, and in the five minutes before the interval Rudi Voller's men began to wilt.

In terms of chances, Brazil, for all the Germans' impressive efforts, could have been four or five goals clear, and no one could have argued. But then this Brazil, for all the wonderful reputations of their forwards, had not proved themselves so ruthless around the goal area.

The initial exchanges brought yellow cards for Roque Junior for a trip on Oliver Neuville and Miroslav Klose for an elbow into Edmilson's neck. But Edmilson proved he was not too badly hurt a minute later with a sharp clearance for a corner as the superb Bernd Schneider arrowed in a cross.

Schneider, Neuville and Torsten Frings were all lively down the German right, giving Roberto Carlos little chance to enjoy himself in attack. But Brazil should have taken the lead in the 19th minute when Ronaldinho unhinged the German defence. However, Ronaldo shot wide of both keeper Oliver Kahn and his left-hand post. On 30 minutes Ronaldo had another chance. This time Kahn was quickly forward to save the one-on-one opening.

The only German shot of the first half came in the 41st minute when a Jens Jeremies drive flew safely high over Marcos' bar. The remaining five minutes were all Brazil. First, the German defence stood still, allowing Kleberson to stride through the middle, but fortunately for them he shot horribly wide. Three minutes later the midfielder fired a 25-yard drive against the bar. Then, in first-half overtime, Ronaldo went clear, only to be foiled again by Kahn, this time with his legs.

The Germans revived briefly after half-time. Marcos dived to defy a Jeremies header, then the keeper tipped Neuville's hard-driven free-kick on to a post after Schneider had been fouled by Gilberto Silva. And that was it. Once Ronaldo had punished a rare error by Kahn, spilling a low drive from Rivaldo after 67 minutes, it was all over. Germany did not have the attacking verve to score themselves and their vain attempts only exposed them, 12 minutes later, to a further killer blow from the player even his team-mates address as "*O Fenomeno*" – "The Phenomenon".

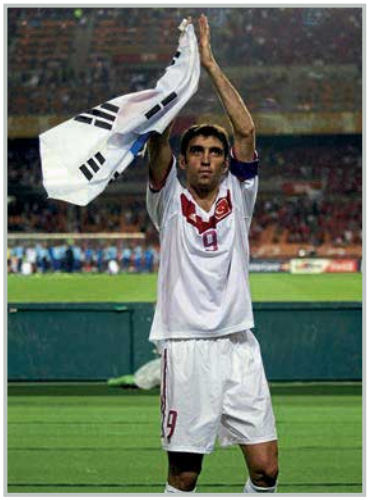
No doubt Ronaldo, the World Cup's eight-goal top scorer, will go on to collect end-of-year awards as FIFA World Player of the Year and the European Footballer of the Year (on the grounds that he plays for Inter of Italy). But his revival after an injury-scarred four years was a gesture exclusively for the people of Brazil. Four years ago, Brazil retreated from the Stade de France amid all sorts of controversies over Ronaldo's collapse and their team's similar failure.

Then, it did not matter in the greater scheme of things as the rest of the world rose to salute France. This time around, the World Cup needed Brazil to rise to the occasion. Ronaldo and Co. did not let the game down.

Keir Radnedge

The World Cup needed Brazil** to rise to the occasion. Ronaldo and Co. **did not let the game down

Shock...Senegal beat holders France in the opening game



FAR LEFT: Hosts with the most... South Korea made history by reaching the semi-finals

LEFT: Fastest-ever World Cup goal... Turkey's Hakan Sukur scored after 10.8 seconds in the third place play-off

THE FINAL

June 30, 2002 – Yokohama, Attendance: 69,029

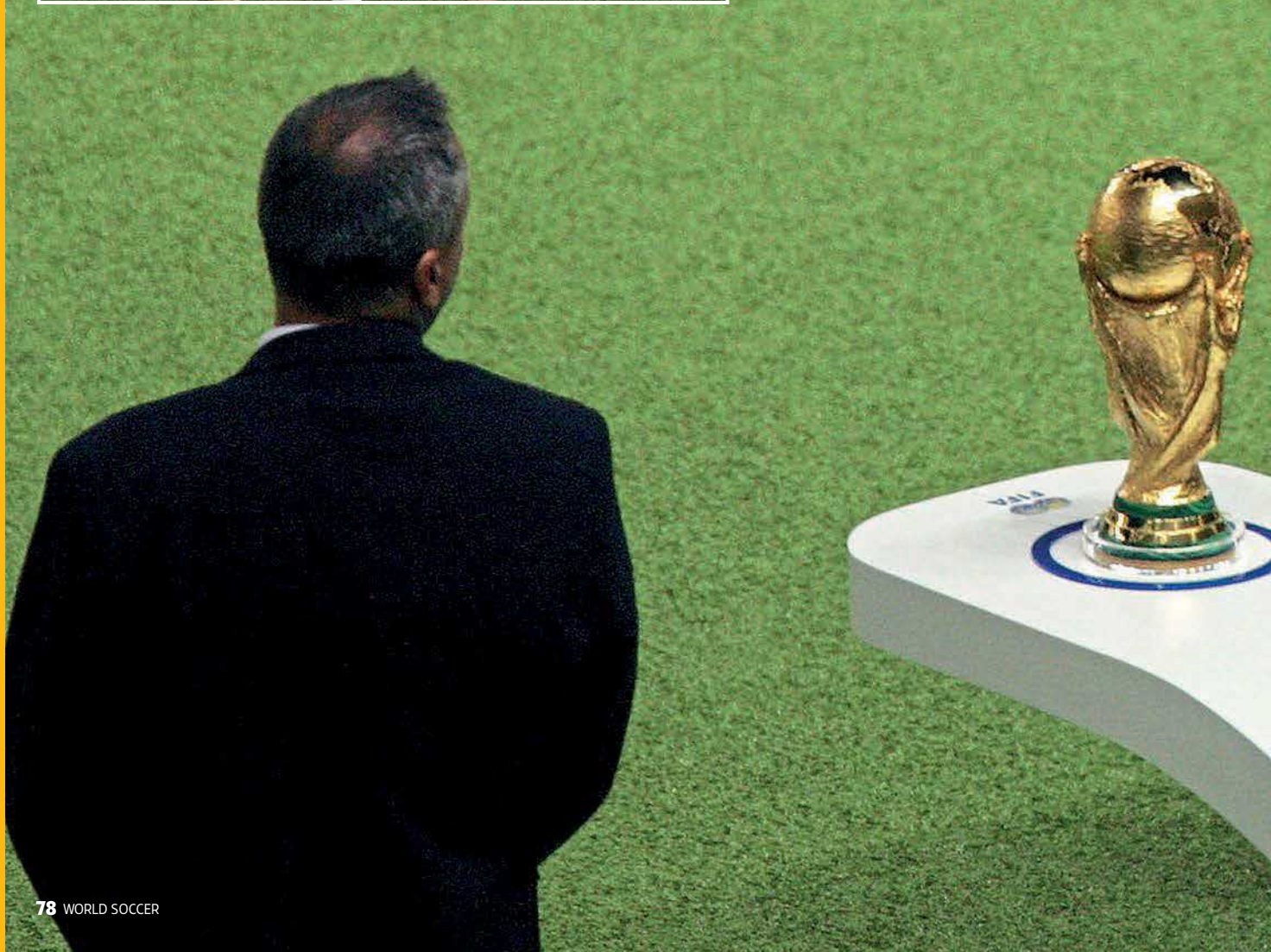
BRAZIL 2-0 GERMANY

Ronaldo 67, 79

Team: Marcos – Lucio, Edmilson, Roque Junior – Cafu, Gilberto Silva, Kleberson, Roberto Carlos – Ronaldinho (Juninho Paulista 85) – Rivaldo, Ronaldo (Denilson 90). **Coach:** Luiz Felipe Scolari

Team: Kahn – Linke, Ramelow, Metzelder – Frings, Hamann, Jeremies (Asamoah 77), Bode (Ziege 84) – Schneider – Neuville, Klose (Bierhoff 74). **Coach:** Rudi Voller

ICONIC MOMENT



ZIZOU OFF AND AWAY

Any other exit would have been preferable. If Zinedine Zidane had missed the decisive penalty in the World Cup final shootout the world game would have thrown down its regrets but still remembered the genius of achievement in 1998 and 2000 with France, and in 2002 with Real Madrid.

If Zidane had missed the final through injury or suspension it would not have affected his reputation. After all, when he quit *Les Bleus* after Euro 2004 no one expected to see him at another World Cup, let alone with a chance of winning it.

But getting sent off for a butt, ten minutes from the end of extra-time in his very last game? Sad. But maybe not surprising. Before the final, Zidane had been sent off 13 times in his career, the first in 1993, making it an average of one per year. Yet he had not been dismissed since April 2005. Statistically, the red against Italy was overdue.

His excuses are immaterial. The damage of that image, flashed around the world, has been done. The man voted finest player at the 2006 World Cup will be remembered not for the award, weight of trophies and titles down the years, but for that flashpoint.

Up until that moment in Berlin, Zidane was unquestionably the greatest of the four Frenchmen who have been hailed as European Footballer of the Year. Raymond Kopa collected his prize for inspiring *Les Bleus* to third place at the 1958 World Cup; Michel Platini won a hat-trick of awards in the mid-1980s when he rivalled Diego Maradona as the finest footballer on Earth; Jean-Pierre Papin was crowned for his avalanche of goals with Marseille.

But great as Kopa and Platini were – Papin was a "mere" shooting star – neither had won the World Cup. Zidane not only collected a winners' medal after the 3-0 final victory over Brazil in 1998, he also scored two of the goals.

After the butt, an internet poll run by *L'Equipe* questioned whether Zidane's career would be forever marred by the manner of his farewell. Only 39 per cent of French fans agreed, with 61 per cent firmly in denial. But we all know what we saw. Sadly.

Keir Radnedge

in **FOCUS**

A disconsolate Zinedine Zidane trudges off after his butt sends Italy's Marco Materazzi flying in the 2006 World Cup final in Berlin

Forza Italia

The finals' structure and schedule meant that the best football at the 2006 World Cup was not in the knockout phase, where it should have been, but in the early group games

Four events rolled into one. That is the World Cup. Hence the mixed, confused reactions to Germany 2006. Was it a football classic? Was it a demonstration of organisational perfection? Was it a fan fest? Or was it just a cash cow?

"The best ever World Cup," said FIFA president Sepp Blatter, as he says after every World Cup, and, in financial terms, he was right.

But, beyond the business end, the World Cup is a sporting romance, and FIFA does not give the competing countries the respect they are due in terms of logistics and schedule.

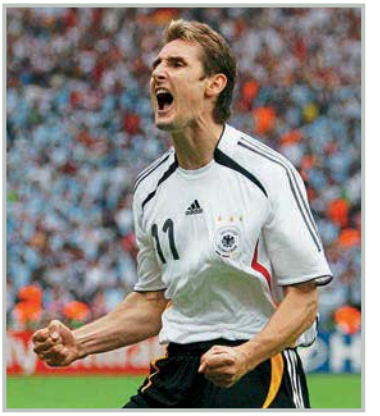
Once upon a time, the finals generated their finest football in the knockout stages when the shackles had come off and the players were into all-or-nothing. Sadly, now, the opposite is true. The best football of the finals – and the finest goals – came in the opening two rounds of the group stage when the players were more relaxed and still at the peak of condition after the four-week break since the end of their domestic competitions.

By the time the groups were over, every surviving coach understood the dangers posed by long-range shooting and drilled their teams to close down the shooters at high speed.

Fatigue had also set in. A number of teams underestimated the effect of the heat in the afternoon and oppressive atmosphere within the tent-style stadia even in the late evenings. Some teams had so little ambition they did not think beyond the first round – notably Ukraine and Switzerland, as their horrendous second round meeting demonstrated.

Great matches? None. Outstanding performances? Argentina against Serbia & Montenegro, but that was

For the fourth time... Italy lift the World Cup yet again



FAR LEFT: Decisive ...David Trezeguet missed the only penalty in the shootout

LEFT: Golden Boot winner...Germany star Miroslav Klose scored five goals

compromised because the Serbs were so poor. Maybe the semi-final between Italy and Germany, but by then the snap had gone out of Germany's legs as the emotional weight of domestic expectation took its toll.

Disappointments? The Czech Republic, who ran out of strikers, which was more bad luck than bad planning. And awful England, an embarrassment whose underwhelming displays against Paraguay, Trinidad & Tobago, Sweden and Ecuador before the penalty-shootout exit to Portugal should prompt a realistic reassessment of what is supposed to pass for quality in the Premiership.

Then again, what sort of World Cup is it when a team – Italy – need perform "properly" only once to reach the final?

Everywhere but Italy, this final will be remembered for all the wrong reasons. It will be remembered as a final that sunk to the depressing nadir of penalties and for a disastrous end to the career of Zinedine Zidane when he was sent off for the second time in three World Cups (his first was against Saudi Arabia in 1998).

Zidane, who had put *Les Bleus* ahead from a "normal" penalty in only the seventh minute of the game, was dismissed by Argentinian referee Horacio Elizondo on the evidence of the fourth official after butting Italy defender Marco Materazzi in the chest.

France, who had already substituted attacking spearhead Thierry Henry, thus were missing their two finest penalty exponents for the shootout, which the Italians had earned after Materazzi had equalised with a 19th-minute header.

The only player to miss in the shootout was David Trezeguet. His shot, France's second penalty, flew up past his Juventus club-mate Gigi Buffon and ricocheted back down off the crossbar and away.

Nemesis thus caught up with Trezeguet: he had scored one of the penalties with which France beat Italy in the 1998 quarter-finals, and he had scored the golden goal that beat Italy in the Euro 2000 final.

Fabio Grosso, Italy's fifth penalty-taker, rasped home his kick, and finally Italy had claimed a fourth World Cup. In doing so they also righted the sad memory of their shootout defeat by Brazil in the 1994 final.

The final was an anti-climactic finish to a tournament in which neither Italy nor France had appeared likely finalists after the first round. They had stumbled through their groups and neither had forged a goal-strewn path through their knockout-phase games. So it was no great surprise when their final meeting ended in a shootout.

Zidane told us in advance that he would retire whenever *Les Bleus* reached the end of the road. Sadly, he reached the end of his particular road before the rest of his team-mates.

Keir Radnedge

A final that sunk to the depressing nadir of penalties and a ***disastrous end to the career of Zidane***

THE FINAL

July 9, 2006 – Berlin, Attendance: 69,000 *AET; Italy won 5-3 on penalties*

ITALY 1-1 FRANCE

Materazzi 19 | *Zidane 7 pen*

Team: Buffon – Zambrotta, Materazzi, Cannavaro, Grosso – Camoranesi (Del Piero 86), Gattuso, Pirlo, Perrotta (De Rossi 61) – Totti (Iaquinta 61), Toni.
Coach: Marcello Lippi

Team: Barthez – Sagnol, Thuram, Gallas, Abidal – Vieira (Diarra 56), Makelele – Ribery (Trezeguet 100), Zidane, Malouda – Henry (Wiltord 107).
Coach: Raymond Domenech

ICONIC MOMENT

AFRICA EXPECTS

The first World Cup in Africa is hugely symbolic for a continent that is so often mired in the misery of mankind: famine, war and poverty. It has the potential to be a coming-out party, an opportunity to put a firm foot forward and make a bid for respect where to date there has been but pity and derision.

The four-yearly footballing fiesta is an event of such strong international symbolism – not to mention a media interest unlike anything else – that its mere hosting by an African country has widespread resonance.

It is the first time Africa has hosted anything of this magnitude. There is no past history of failure for there has been no past opportunity. Instead there are now monuments to the potential of success: six magnificently built stadia – breathtaking symbols of what is possible.

African football is still a mercurial beast, frustratingly full of potential but inconsistent. Playing on home soil was supposed to be the springboard for its progression but there is not much hope in the six nations it fields in 2010.

Algeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Ivory Coast and South Africa were all handed tough draws and do not have enough playing resources to believe they can create anything like the awe-inspiring, dream-like performance that it was hoped this World Cup would engender. Nigeria are the one side who can claim to have been fortunate in the draw, yet their knee-jerk reaction in changing coach just months before the finals may prove an act of self-sabotage.

So, instead of a prolonged assault on the knockout stages that was forecast when an African World Cup was first mooted, and one that would elevate African football to a potential of all kinds of new riches, now any progress past the first round will be celebrated.

But Africa will still resonate with World Cup fever even if her own sons are no longer competing in the finals. The global reach of the modern game means that the likes of Lionel Messi and Wayne Rooney are as fervently followed as Didier Drogba and Samuel Eto'o.

Mark Gleeson

in FOCUS

Knockout-stage drama as Frank Lampard's "goal" failed to be given despite the ball being clearly over the line in England's crushing round-of-16 defeat to Germany, while Luis Suarez handles on the goal-line and gets sent off as Uruguay dump Ghana out on penalties in the quarter-finals

Hail the change

Spain, for so long the great underachievers, are now the overachievers of the international game after adding World Cup success to their European Championship triumph

So accustomed to ask what went wrong, Spain – for so long the game's great underachievers, now its world and European champions – are now asking what went so right? And so too is everyone else.

The temptation might be to answer everything, but that just wouldn't be true. And not just because Spain lost their opening game against Switzerland. Until Spain beat Paraguay in the quarter-finals, there were countless questions and debates swirling around the *Seleccion*.

It is as if it took Spain breaking that barrier and reaching a first-ever semi-final for critics to agree that, actually, they were rather good after all. Maybe just not good in quite the same way as everyone had expected. By the end of the tournament, as much was being said about the quality of Spain's defence as their attack, as much about solidity as fantasy.

Extra-time winner... Andres Iniesta fires home in the final versus Netherlands

Among the questions, the queries and the fears were the form of striker Fernando Torres, eventually dropped against Germany, and the role of the infamous double pivot – most didn't see the need for two nominally deep-playing midfielders and called for one of Xabi Alonso or Sergio Busquets to be ditched. Some wanted Cesc Fabregas in the side, some David Silva. Some feared that Andres Iniesta was not fit enough.

Then there were those who were concerned about the relative lack of goals, David Villa rescuing Spain almost single-handedly – and becoming a huge national hero into the bargain, finally getting the unqualified recognition he had long deserved.

The path had been relatively clear – they avoided Brazil, Italy and Argentina – and though they had reached the final against the Netherlands, their progress had not always been as impressive as hoped.

They had been under terrible pressure against Chile – a game they needed to win to even get out the group – until Villa scored a wonderful long-range goal. Against Portugal, they struggled to find a way through, Villa eventually scoring from what looked very close to an offside position. Against Paraguay, Iker Casillas saved a penalty

***Viva Espana*...Spain finally become the world champions**

that might well have put them out, then made a stunning point-blank stop in the dying minutes that certainly would have put Paraguay back in it.

Even against Germany in the semi-finals, there was a wonderful chance for Toni Kroos and the Spain goal came from a powering header at a corner – not the most *tiki-taka* of goals.

After the Germany game there was a very different reading, though. That was natural enough – the opponents were different and, in truth, the performance had been too. Control without flair appears so much more impressive against a side that had mostly wowed watchers rather than, say, Paraguay.

When they defeated Germany, any doubts were finally washed away with the sports daily *AS* declaring: "That must be how football is played in paradise."

For Spain, the way they reached the final was significant – if not, obviously quite as significant as the fact they got there at all. After the Honduras and Chile games – oddly, the only ones in which they scored twice, making Spain the lowest-scoring world champions of all time – some had accused them of selling out on their *tiki-taka* style.

They were wrong. The opposite is in fact true: if there is one thing that went right above all others it is Spain's commitment to a footballing style. It might not have been as dazzling as some hoped, but it was devastatingly effective. Possession of the ball was shown not only to be a means to scoring goals but, more importantly, a means to preventing them too, a way of controlling the game.

One thing that went right *above all others is Spain's commitment to* **a footballing style**

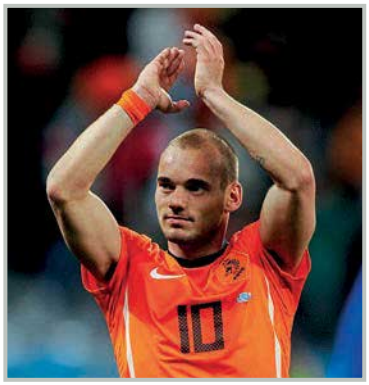
And no one maintains possession quite like Spain. Yes, they had had their nervy moments. Sure, they had not created the chances they expected, but there was an unquestioned mastery to their games – no other side in the World Cup produced as many passes or enjoyed greater possession, effectively neutering the opposition. *Tiki-taka* can, it seems, be a defensive tactic as much as an offensive one.

A triumph for Africa...Soccer City stadium's fireworks light up the night sky after the 2010 World Cup final

And so to Spain the glory. Justice left it very late in the final but finally had the utterly deserved last word. Not until four minutes from the end of extra-time and the fearful threat of a penalty shootout did Iniesta strike down a clumping, kicking and clogging Dutch team.

Spain made desperately hard work of it, but the Spanish have long considered their football the most aesthetic. It has finally proven the most effective too.

Sid Lowe & Keir Radnedge



Stars of South Africa...(clockwise) Golden Boot winner Thomas Muller, Wesley Sneijder, David Villa and Diego Forlan all scored five goals

THE FINAL

July 11, 2010 – Johannesburg, Attendance: 84,490 *After Extra-Time*

SPAIN 1-0 NETHERLANDS

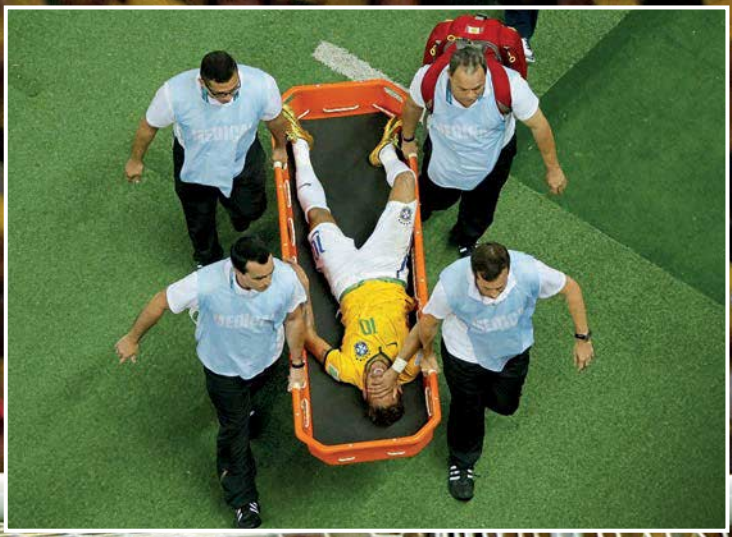
Iniesta 116

Team: Casillas – Ramos, Pique, Puyol, Capdevila – Busquets, Xabi Alonso (Fabregas 87) – Iniesta, Xavi, Pedro (Navas 60) – Villa (Torres 106).
Coach: Vicente del Bosque

Team: Stekelenburg – Van der Wiel, Heitinga, Mathijsen, Van Bronckhorst (Braafheid 105) – Van Bommel, De Jong (Van der Vaart 99) – Robben, Sneijder, Kuyt (Elia 71) – Van Persie.
Coach: Bert van Marwijk

2010
World Champions
SPAIN

ICONIC MOMENT



BELO HORIZONTE: CITY OF SHOCKS

Since 1950, it seemed inconceivable that there could ever be a surprise as great as that when a job lot of part-time USA footballers beat an England team studded with stars 1-0 in Belo Horizonte, on what was a bumpy pitch in a ramshackle stadium. But in that same city, albeit in a huge imposing arena, came a surprise as great, if not greater, as Germany thrashed Brazil 7-1.

How good then were Germany? How bad were Brazil? I'd suggest that a good deal of it was Brazil manager "Big Phil" Scolari's fault, though the absence in defence of Thiago Silva – would he have let David Luiz run riot? – and Neymar in attack was crucial.

When the smoke clears, I think it will be realised that this was not one of the great World Cups. Were it not for the decisive presence of Lionel Messi, you might say that once Neymar was so shamefully kneed out of action it almost became a question of Hamlet without the Prince.

Neymar, before his injury after that appalling foul by Colombia's Juan Zuniga in the quarter-finals, had been extremely important to a team which played virtually without a centre-forward. Poor, pedestrian Fred.

What happened to the great Brazilian tradition of centre-forwards?

Go back to the 1938 World Cup in France and there was little Leonidas, with his famous bicycle-kick, who was top scorer in that tournament. In 1950, there was Ademir at the centre of a devastating attacking trio and the scorer of nine goals. When Brazil won the World Cup in Sweden in 1958 their attack, as again in 1962, was led by the incisive and quick Vava, with the young Jose "Mazzola" Altafini a precocious alternative. More recently there was the dynamic Romario, followed by the powerful, formidable Ronaldo.

If Brazil relied so heavily on Neymar, so eternal rivals Argentina were even more deeply indebted to Messi. This gloriously elusive player scored and set up vital goals. What would a largely modest Argentina team have been without him?

Brian Glanville

in ***FOCUS***

Brazil players sink to the ground in shock after their 7-1 humbling by Germany in the semi-finals, while Neymar is carried off in tears in the quarter-final against Colombia

The perfect ending

Germany's success provided a fitting end to a wonderful tournament in Brazil

The German fans were in no rush to leave the Maracana. An hour earlier, Mario Gotze's goal had won a fourth World Cup for Germany. They were not leaving until they had savoured every last drop of victory.

Players joined supporters in joyful celebrations that epitomised the unity of their squad. It was another triumph for the World Cup's most consistently successful nation. Brazil may have won more trophies, but Germany now have a quartet of cups, as well as a record 14 appearances in semi-finals. Brazil, by contrast, have contested nine semis.

The final had pitted individual brilliance in the form of Lionel Messi against the collective power of Germany; the tournament's most talented individual against its strongest team. The great faultline of top-level football had been clearly drawn.

In the end, Argentina produced their best performance of the tournament but they lacked the killer touch when they needed it most. Germany's deep squad proved too strong. Two substitutes combined for the decisive goal, with Andre Schurrle providing the cross for Gotze's electric finish. Gotze was the hero of the night, but it was a victory obtained through old-fashioned virtues of guts and determination. Nobody epitomised that more than Bastian Schweinsteiger, his face marked with blood after a clash with Sergio Aguero.

World Cup golden boy...match-winner Mario Gotze kisses the famous trophy

"If anyone deserves it then it's this team with Lahm, Schweinsteiger, Mertesacker, Podolski, Klose," Joachim Low said.

Germany's squad was packed full of big personalities but nobody was bigger than the team itself. Manuel Neuer was more than a goalkeeper, often operating as a third centre-back.

Mats Hummels and Jerome Boateng proved a solid centre-back partnership in the knockout stages after Low had moved Philipp Lahm back to right-back from the quarter-finals onwards. On the other flank, Benedikt Howedes excelled despite being played out of his usual central position.

Sami Khedira made a miraculous recovery from a knee injury and was exceptional alongside Schweinsteiger in the semi-final demolition of Brazil. Khedira's injury in the final warm-up would have derailed lesser teams, but Germany were able to re-jig their resources. Even when Christoph Kramer, making his first competitive start, was forced off with concussion after half an hour, Toni Kroos dropped into a deeper midfield role with substitute Schurrle providing more attacking bite.

Kroos came of age during the tournament. Mesut Ozil was quietly effective. Thomas Muller was the silent assassin, scoring a hat-trick against Portugal. Miroslav Klose, the veteran of the squad by some distance, eclipsed Ronaldo's 15 goals as the World Cup's all-time highest scorer with his strike against Brazil. The striker was originally restricted to cameo appearances, with Gotze preferred in a "false nine" position. But Low demonstrated his ability to adapt formations by bringing in the 36-year-old Klose as a conventional centre-forward in the latter stages of the knockout phase.

For Low and the German football federation, victory at the Maracana was the culmination of a process that began a decade ago. Germany's successive failures at the European Championship – failing to win a single game in 2000 or 2004 – prompted a thorough re-think of German football structures. Money was invested in youth development, with the

full co-operation of Bundesliga clubs.

Germany's line-up against Brazil in the semi-final included six players who won the 2009 European Under-21 Championship: Neuer, Howedes, Boateng, Hummels, Khedira, Ozil. The ability to integrate young players has been key to their success. So has the ability to respond to changes in football's tactical landscape.

While Germany have adapted, so Brazil have stagnated. Luiz Felipe Scolari won the 2002 World Cup because he found a tactical template that allowed Ronaldo, Ronaldinho and Rivaldo to thrive in the same team.

Twelve years later, Scolari tried to create a system that would get the best from Neymar. But when the music stopped and Brazil's poster boy was injured, a team built around a static target man and midfield destroyers was woefully exposed.

Germany's demolition of Brazil in Belo Horizonte was dazzling in its ruthlessness. Technically superior on every level, in movement, touch and thought, Low's men highlighted the importance of mental strength at the highest level of the game. Brazil tried to ride a wave of national emotion as they sought a sixth World Cup victory. The tears shed by Julio Cesar and David Luiz may have galvanised the public, but they also exposed the emotional fragility at the heart of the squad.

Luiz, captain in the absence of Thiago Silva, and Cesar had held aloft a Neymar shirt during the singing of the national anthem before the semi-final. But such actions only highlighted Brazil's dependence on their star player and their subsequent weakness without him. Dunga, the former captain and coach, criticised the action for placing unnecessary strain on the players.

In contrast, Germany's players waited until after their final victory before celebrating with a shirt in honour of Marco Reus, the Borussia Dortmund winger who was injured on the eve of the tournament. A time and a place for everything.

When it came to mental pressure Lionel Messi showed that he could cope. He turned 27 in Brazil and was named Player of the Tournament, but he will be 31 at the next World Cup and probably missed Argentina's best chance at the World Cup for a generation. Nonetheless, Argentina coach Alejandro Sabella defended his captain, saying: "As for his reputation, he is in that pantheon. But he was there before. He has been there for quite some time."

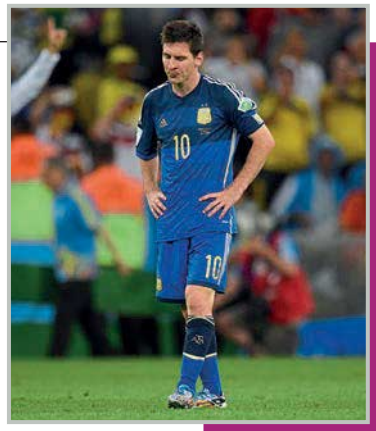
We were fortunate that Messi made it to the final at all. Neymar was the high-profile casualty of a brutal foul by Colombia's Juan Zuniga in the quarter-final, even if Brazil's players were also guilty of systematic, rotation fouling of six-goal Golden Boot winner James Rodriguez in that same match. Almost every game contained an incident where a yellow card should have been issued, but was not.

By default, referees contributed to greater attacking play. The 48 group matches featured 136 goals, an average of 2.83 – way up on 2010 and the highest since 1970. In total, 171 goals, a joint-record with 1998 and far more than the 145 in 2010.

So how to explain the change? We had more goalkeeping mistakes (step forward Spain's Iker Casillas) and poor defending from set-pieces (Italy's opener against England). There were a lot of early goals, forcing teams into earlier-than-planned changes of formation. The Brazuca ball was a clear improvement on the Jabulani from 2010. Players had more confidence that the Brazuca would not swerve out of control, as the Jabulani did, and so could shoot with greater confidence.

The crowds, too, played their part. In South Africa, the vuvuzelas deflated the atmosphere at stadiums. Spectators in Brazil expected to be entertained and applauded attacking play.

There was no obvious plan to promote greater attacking football. It just happened. Indeed, this was the accidental World Cup, the DIY Mundial. Despite warnings beforehand that things would not be ready everything worked, more or less. FIFA got away with things through luck, rather than judgement.



ABOVE: Shock... unfancied Costa Rica were the surprise packages of Brazil 2014, losing on penalties to Netherlands in the quarter-finals

TOP LEFT: Top goalscorer... Colombia's James Rodriguez scored a wondergoal in the last 16 v Uruguay

TOP: Missed opportunity...a dejected Lionel Messi after the World Cup final

South American supporters ignored warnings from FIFA not to visit Brazil without hotel bookings and travel reservations. Thousands jumped in their cars and camper vans, drove hundreds of miles and stayed in improvised campsites far away from FIFA's controlling gaze. The corporate commercial yardstick which FIFA applies to all its activities was ignored by the supporters, who provided the colour and personality that previous tournaments have lacked.

All of which made FIFA's folly in taking the World Cup to Qatar in 2022 look all the more ridiculous. The 2014 finals were an outstanding success because they took place in a country where football is the lifeblood of the people.

After holding the tournament in South Africa in 2010, FIFA believed it could take the World Cup anywhere in the world. But Brazil have shown the value of hosting the World Cup in a traditional football nation.

Just ask the German supporters celebrating in the Maracana.

Gavin Hamilton

THE FINAL

July 13, 2014 – Rio de Janeiro, Attendance: 74,738 *After Extra-Time*

GERMANY 1-0 ARGENTINA

Gotze 113

Team: Neuer – Lahm, Boateng, Hummels, Howedes – Schweinsteiger, Kramer (Schurrle 32), Kroos – Muller, Ozil (Mertesacker 120), Klose (Gotze 88).
Coach: Joachim Low

Team: Romero – Zabaleta, Garay, Demichelis, Rojo – Mascherano, Biglia – Perez (Gago 86), Messi, Lavezzi (Aguero 45) – Higuain (Palacio 78).
Coach: Alejandro Sabella

2014
World Champions
GERMANY

ICONIC MOMENT

BRAVE ENGLAND SHINE IN RUSSIA

In the event, it has to be said that England surpassed themselves in Russia, maintaining a brave challenge while other more fancied teams fell by the wayside: Germany, in the most embarrassing manner; Brazil who, even if they avoided anything like the humiliation of Belo Horizonte and Germany in the previous World Cup, were never the power of bygone times; Spain fell early; Portugal, even with Cristiano Ronaldo, made scant progress; and Italy were not even there.

For a gloriously deluding first half it did look as if England could defeat Croatia. They scored that magnificent early goal through Kieran Trippier's sublime free-kick. They largely bettered a Croatia team that looked predictably weary after playing extra-time in their previous two games. Harry Kane, not at his sharpest and perhaps not even at his fittest, had an excellent chance to make it 2-0 at which point I believe England would have gone on to win.

But Kane missed and England went out. Instead of looking still more tired in the second half, Croatia suddenly, vigorously and impressively came to life and took control of the game.

The simple fact of the matter is that they are a much more talented team than England, who do not have a Luka Modric, that gifted little conjurer in midfield who became more and more of a dominant figure as the game went on.

Gareth Southgate, alas, did not have a creative midfielder to touch Modric, arguably the best player on the field.

Brian Glanville

in ***FOCUS***

England beat Colombia in the last 16 to record their first-ever World Cup penalty shootout success, while captain Harry Kane lifts aloft his 2018 Golden Boot award

France reach the summit again

Les Bleus **win the World Cup for a second time in a finals to remember**

Golden ticker tape showered down on France's rain-soaked players as they celebrated winning the World Cup for a second time in one of the most memorable finals of the modern era. Minutes earlier, as the players queued up to receive the trophy, the heavens had opened, soaking the FIFA dignitaries and adding to the chaos of an already frenetic night in Moscow.

It was a frantic finale to a hugely eventful tournament. Thirty-two days packed with incident and drama, shocks and surprises. France were the last men standing, but they fully deserved their victory having overcome a Croatia side that had finally been undone by fatigue after an exhausting journey to the final.

Croatia were left nursing a sense of injustice when, having brought the final level at 1-1 after half an hour, they conceded a penalty to a controversial refereeing decision. By the letter of the law, Ivan Perisic had handled the ball at a corner, but referee Nestor Pitana took an age to assess the images on the pitchside VAR monitor.

The game had been evenly matched until that point, but Croatia were visibly affected by a decision which resulted in Antoine Griezmann's penalty giving France a lead they never surrendered.

Croatia, having staged a remarkable comeback in all three of their earlier knockout games en route to the final, tried to rally themselves, but then their energies evaporated. Goals in quick succession by Paul Pogba and Kylian Mbappe cemented France's impregnable lead. Although Hugo Lloris gave Croatia hope with a goalkeeping howler that brought the deficit back to two goals, Croatia could not find the energy to challenge in the remaining minutes.

Throughout the tournament, starting with a controversial penalty against Australia – the first to be awarded by VAR – Didier Deschamps' men did just enough to overcome their opponents.

ABOVE: ***Le Magnifique*** **...World Cup number two for** ***Les Bleus***

Set-pieces were key against Uruguay in the quarter-finals, when a goalkeeping mistake confirmed their victory, while Samuel Umtiti's header from a corner saw off Belgium in a tense semi-final.

The one match when France did cut loose was against Argentina in the last 16, when the brilliance of Mbappe tore the South American defence to shreds – even if the 4-3 scoreline did suggest Argentina had made a game of it.

The chastening experience of losing to an unexceptional Portugal two years ago on home soil prompted the coach to make bold changes. Fourteen of the squad from Euro 2016 did not make it to Russia. Those that were brought in were younger and more capable of adapting to the coach's way of thinking.

And so France won their second World Cup and Deschamps became only the third man to win the World Cup as a player and coach. He had been the heartbeat of the team that sparked wild celebrations across France 20 years ago.

Indeed, there are many parallels with 1998. There was the teenage striker from Monaco (Thierry Henry/Mbappe); the workaholic "water carrier" (Deschamps/N'Golo Kante); the striker who failed to score (Stephane Guivarc'h/Olivier Giroud) and the goalscoring right-back (Lilian Thuram/Benjamin Pavard).

And while the 2018 winners did not have anybody of the class of Zinedine Zidane, they did have Griezmann and Pogba, two players who, when it mattered most, majestically rose to the occasion.

It had all begun 32 days earlier in the same stadium, when a Russia team – beset by injuries and unsure of itself after a string of poor friendly results in the build-up – took to the pitch against Saudi Arabia, arguably the weakest team ever to contest the opening match.

Russia lost their best player, Alan Dzagoev, to injury early on. But five goals, including two for substitute Denis Cheryshev, ignited their campaign and energised the home supporters.

The following day, a thrilling 3-3 draw between Spain and Portugal in Sochi further set the tone for attacking football in the group stage – Cristiano Ronaldo scoring a scintillating hat-trick.

Any suggestion that the tournament's big guns would find the group phase easy pickings were quickly dispelled. Argentina scraped into the knockout stage, drawing with debutants Iceland and being humbled 3-0 by Croatia before a brilliant Lionel Messi goal inspired them past Nigeria. While the biggest shock of the group stage saw Germany crash out.

After falling 1-0 to a vibrant Mexico in Moscow, the Germans looked back on track following Toni Kroos' dramatic free-kick winner in the dying seconds against Sweden. But, with complacency never far away, they fell to already-eliminated South Korea with Son Heung-min tapping home after goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, the embodiment of German confidence and superiority in Brazil four years ago, was caught upfield as he tried in vain to join his team-mates as they frantically searched for an equaliser.

Fellow Asian nations Iran, Saudi Arabia and Australia joined Korea in exiting in the groups, and that's where the African challenge ended too. With Senegal and Japan unable to be separated other than by their disciplinary records, the Senegalese, with more yellow cards, lost out, leaving the round of 16 lacking any African representation with Morocco, Nigeria, Tunisia and Egypt already out. The other nations to fall in the first round were a terrific and unlucky Peru, plus Iceland, Serbia, Costa Rica, Panama (who England hit for six) and Poland.

And so to the round of 16 – where the draw started to skew with one side much stronger than the other – and the big guns starting to fall. First Argentina went, gone after a seven-goal thriller with France in which Mbappe stole the show from Messi. A few hours later, Portugal joined them on the way out after Uruguay's Edinson Cavani put them to the sword. And the next day, Spain were out after hosts Russia took them to a penalty shootout. At least Andres Iniesta converted his spot-kick, but it was still a miserable way for the great man to end his international career.

Colombia and Mexico went too. The Mexicans fell to Brazil, with Neymar raising his game when his country needed him. Colombia will wonder what might have been had they been more positive, but their main contribution was to help England end their World Cup penalties hoodoo.

Belgium and Croatia both showed remarkable powers of recovery. Belgium came from 2-0 down to stun Japan, who had been on the brink of a memorable victory until Belgium's second-half substitutes helped turn the game, while Croatia demonstrated the mental strength that would come to serve them so well in the latter stages by triumphing over Denmark on penalties.

Sweden claimed the final place in the last eight after grinding down Switzerland. The Swedes had not played particularly well but they could now, along with England and Croatia, see the draw opening up before them.

Into the quarter-finals and Uruguay's challenge, missing the injured Cavani, ended as France did just about enough, helped by a goalkeeping error from the unfortunate Fernando Muslera. But Brazil, just as they looked capable of competing for a first world crown since 2002, were taken apart by Belgium.

Russia's journey ended after an epic battle, settled by penalties, with Croatia, who again dug deep to equalise and then compose themselves for the shootout after handing Russia a lifeline late in extra-time. England, meanwhile, reached their first semi-final for 28 years after seeing off Sweden with relative ease.

The first semi-final between Belgium and France felt like a final in all but name, with two heavyweights engaged in a high-quality showdown. France again did just enough, defending diligently against a vibrant Belgium.

And just as England began to dream of the final, they met their match in Croatia, who came from behind to take a game into extra-time for the third match running.

Croatia's players claimed afterwards that English arrogance – epitomised by the song, "*Football's Coming Home*" – drove them on when their physical powers were waning.

Ultimately, football did not come home but, for some, the song that revelled in self-deprecating humour had come back to haunt English football.

Gavin Hamilton

ABOVE: Ground-breaking...Russia 2018 was the first-ever World Cup to implement VAR

TOP: Luka Modric and Kylian Mbappe ...World Cup 2018's Best Player and Best Young Player respectively pose with their awards

THE FINAL

July 15, 2018 – Moscow, Attendance: 78,011

FRANCE 4-2 CROATIA

Mandzukic 18 og, Griezmann 38 pen, Pogba 59, Mbappe 65

Team: Lloris – Pavard, Varane, Umtiti, L. Hernandez – Pogba, Kante (Nzonzi 55) – Mbappe, Griezmann, Matuidi (Tolisso 73) – Giroud (Fekir 81).
Coach: Didier Deschamps

Perisic 28, Mandzukic 69

Team: Subasic – Vrsaljko, Lovren, Vida, Strinic (Pjaca 81) – Rakitic, Brozovic – Rebic (Kramaric 71), Modric, Perisic – Mandzukic.
Coach: Zlatko Dalic

2018
World Champions
FRANCE

ICONIC MOMENT

SAUDI SHOCK, AND A FINAL FOR THE AGES

What a World Cup. FIFA president Gianni Infantino called it the "best ever". For quality alone, probably not. But for drama, quite possibly so. Football punditry is often guilty of hyperbole, but the final was, without question, one of the most memorable, breathtaking and dramatic of all time.

After all of the talk and controversy off the pitch, this World Cup needed to deliver on it. And that it certainly did.

Saudi Arabia's shock victory over Argentina kick-started the tournament and will live long in the memory, going down in football folklore as the biggest upset in World Cup history alongside the United States shocking England in 1950, Cameroon upsetting Argentina in 1990 and Senegal beating France in 2002.

It helped set a trend – "World Cup of the underdog" as it was labelled – with lots of shocks, including Tunisia beating France, Australia sinking Denmark, and Japan edging out heavyweights Spain and Germany. But Morocco, who saw off Belgium, Canada, Spain and Portugal on their way to becoming the first-ever African nation to make it to the semi-finals, deserve most of the plaudits.

Despite the many upsets, there were also outcomes that many had predicted: England once again suffering penalty pain (albeit not via the conventional route of a shootout); Brazil, for the fifth consecutive finals, going out as soon as they came up against a European side in the knockout rounds; and Belgium's "golden generation" finding this World Cup a step too far. And, when it came to the crunch, the cream predictably rose to the top, culminating in a final between Argentina and France; a showdown between Lionel Messi and the heir to his throne, Kylian Mbappe.

Argentina's win appeared like destiny for Messi, and for many his Golden Ball performance cements his legacy as the greatest of all time. Indeed, Mbappe becoming only the second player to score a World Cup final hat-trick and winning the Golden Boot in the process – but Messi lifting the trophy – seemed like the perfect conclusion. A symbolic passing of the torch, and a poetic ending to an enthralling and captivating finals.

Stephen Fishlock

in ***FOCUS***

Salem Al Dawsari celebrates scoring his stunning winner in Saudi Arabia's shock group-stage victory over Argentina

Messi: mission accomplished

Argentina's talisman is crowned world champion and football's greatest of all time

The most extraordinary final in World Cup history between the two best teams in the competition and the game's two finest players in Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappe was the perfect climax to the 2022 World Cup.

Mbappe, a hat-trick securing the Golden Boot as the finals' eight-goal top scorer, finished on the losing side as France lost the crown secured four years ago in Moscow. But the enduring story of Qatar's controversial World Cup will focus on Messi.

The 35-year-old did not need World Cup glory to confirm him as one of the greatest of all time, but most football fans wanted it for him. Messi duly opened the scoring and helped create a second for Angel Di Maria. The match was not even a contest until Mbappe's dramatic, late equalising double, the extra-time seesaw and eventually the shootout – in which Messi set the standard with Argentina's first kick.

Messi's breadth of achievement in Qatar was not only the final. *Albiceleste* owed their very presence in Lusail to his magic. On his 1,000th career appearance he had provided the opening goal in the 2-1 second-round victory over Australia. Then *La Pulga* was the early inspiration in the shootout defeat of the Netherlands that defied a late Dutch revival.

Better still, Messi produced the most captivating individual display of the tournament yet in dicing and slicing Croatia in the semi-finals. He opened with a penalty and provided both assists for Julian Alvarez, the second after turning luckless Josip Gvardiol inside-out.

The French, beset by injuries and illness, had a day less than Argentina to recover from a physically punishing semi-final victory over Morocco. That probably proved significant because they started as if in a trance and were then always chasing the game.

The extravaganza cost Qatar £200 billion while FIFA reaped £7bn; history will judge who emerged with the better deal. In the short term, the glory was snatched by three-time champions Argentina after a tournament which produced generally good, entertaining football. Momentum was maintained by a steady string of surprises along with the adventure of Morocco, an Arab-African home team substitute.

Pushed into the background was the negativity arising out of the award, construction workers' deaths and human rights issues. But this was not the end of it. On the eve of the finals, Qatar barred the sale of alcohol at the stadia when it was too late for FIFA to object. Humiliating for FIFA and for president Gianni Infantino – even though he finished up parroting the old Sepp Blatter line about it being "the best World Cup ever."

Further complications arose over seven countries' plan for their captains to wear a OneLove armband. That was quashed by FIFA with threats of yellow or red cards. Hence Germany's players put their hands over their mouths in an

World champion... Messi finally gets his hands on the World Cup trophy

ABOVE: Unlucky loser...France's Kylian Mbappe became only the second player to score a World Cup final hat-trick

LEFT: Fairy tale... Morocco players celebrate after knocking out Portugal

eloquent anti-censorship gesture in the photo-call before playing Japan.

There were suggestions that these political distractions were to blame for the early exits for the likes of Germany and Denmark. But England, Australia and the United States were all vocal about human rights and reached the knockout stages. Iran were also first-round fallers but entangled in political issues all of their own. Equally, Morocco's remarkable progress was in no way hindered by their waving of the Palestinian flag.

The major surprises of the group stage were those eliminations of the Danes, the Germans and Belgium, plus the fact that Qatar were so poor. The hosts had been gifted 12 years to prepare and were Asian champions, yet became only the second hosts (after South Africa in 2010) to fall so fast.

Fortunately for Arab honour, the baton was picked up in glorious style by Saudi Arabia in a thrilling comeback victory over Argentina, by Tunisia in a homeward-bound defeat of France and, most notably, by Morocco in both the group and knockout phases.

Argentina and Messi recovered, emboldened from their Saudi upset in Group C, while France immediately stamped their class on Group D. No problems either in Group B for England. They achieved their best-ever start to a World Cup by defeating Iran 6-2, but Wales, back after 64 years, could only draw 1-1 with the USA. A late penalty from captain Gareth Bale provided their only goal and only point.

Japan contributed even more to the dramatics than Saudi Arabia. Samurai Blue launched Group E with a shock 2-1 comeback win over Germany and ended it by defeating Spain in identical fashion. At one point, as the goals flowed in the last Group E matches, both Germany and Spain were going out. In the end it was Germany who failed on goal difference despite beating Costa Rica 4-2. The tie was also notable for Stephanie Frappart becoming the first woman to referee at a men's World Cup finals.

Morocco's draw with Croatia and defeats of Belgium and Canada made them the first African nation to top a group since 1998. Luka Modric and Croatia, runners-up in Russia in 2018, slipped through in a workmanlike second place and ultimately won the third-place play-off; the veterans of Belgium flew home unlamented.

Brazil danced through Group G despite an early ankle injury to Neymar and a first World Cup loss to an African nation at the hands of Cameroon. Group H witnessed what turned out to be a deceptively happier start for another superstar as Cristiano Ronaldo set Portugal on their way by converting a soft penalty in a 3-2 win over Ghana. Portugal's captain thus became the first player to score in five men's World Cups.

*The enduring story of **Qatar's World Cup** will focus on **Messi***

The last 16 produced two penalty shootouts and one further surprise. Spain, weighed down by Luis Enrique's old-fashioned *tiki-taka*, were stunned by a Morocco team who sparked memories of the turbocharged energy of South Korea in the last Asian finals, in 2002.

The rest went with form for Croatia, Netherlands, Argentina, England, Brazil, France and Portugal, for whom young striker Goncalo Ramos hit a hat-trick against Switzerland after Ronaldo was controversially left on the bench.

Fallers in the quarter-finals included England – in agonising fashion to France after captain Harry Kane had scored and then missed a penalty – and Brazil, to shootout specialists Croatia. The pity for Brazil was that Neymar had been outstanding against Croatia. He played with commitment and focus, eschewed his self-indulgent tendencies and scored one of the finest goals of the finals after a rapid-fire double exchange of passes. Yet he had long left the stage when his Paris Saint-Germain team-mates Messi and Mbappe stepped up for the final act.

If Argentina were the headline winners it has to be stated, for the record, that these finals were a staging triumph for FIFA and Qatar, if not a political one.

For the first time, teams from all five major continents reached the last 16. Also, for the first time, three teams from the AFC (Australia, Japan and South Korea) reached the knockout stages, and, for only the second time, two African teams (Senegal and Morocco) progressed to the knockout phase.

Critical forecasts that nobody would turn up were routed by the crowd statistics. A ticket-sale tally of nearly 3.4 million gave the lie to claims that supporters would be put off by the heat, by the pre-Christmas timing, by the cost and all the rest. At the final whistle not only were France beaten, so were the merchants of doom and gloom.

Keir Radnedge

THE FINAL

December 18, 2022 – Lusail, Attendance: 88,966 *AET; Argentina won 4-2 on pens*

ARGENTINA 3-3 FRANCE

Messi 23 pen, 108, Di Maria 36

Team: E. Martinez – Molina (Montiel 91), Romero, Otamendi, Tagliafico (Dybala 120+1) – De Paul (Paredes 102), Fernandez, Mac Allister (Pezzella 116) – Messi, Alvarez (L. Martinez 102), Di Maria (Acuna 64).
Coach: Lionel Scaloni

Mbappe 80 pen, 81, 118 pen

Team: Lloris – Kounde (Disasi 120+1), Varane (Konate 113), Upamecano, T. Hernandez (Camavinga 71) – Rabiot (Fofana 96), Tchouameni – Dembele (Thuram 41), Griezmann (Coman 71), Mbappe – Giroud (Kolo Muani 41).
Coach: Didier Deschamps

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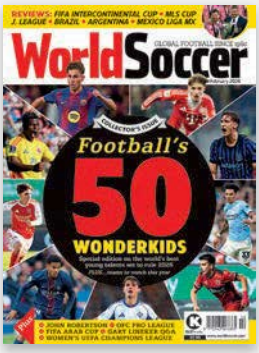

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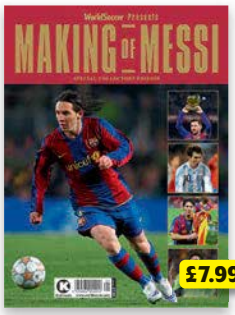

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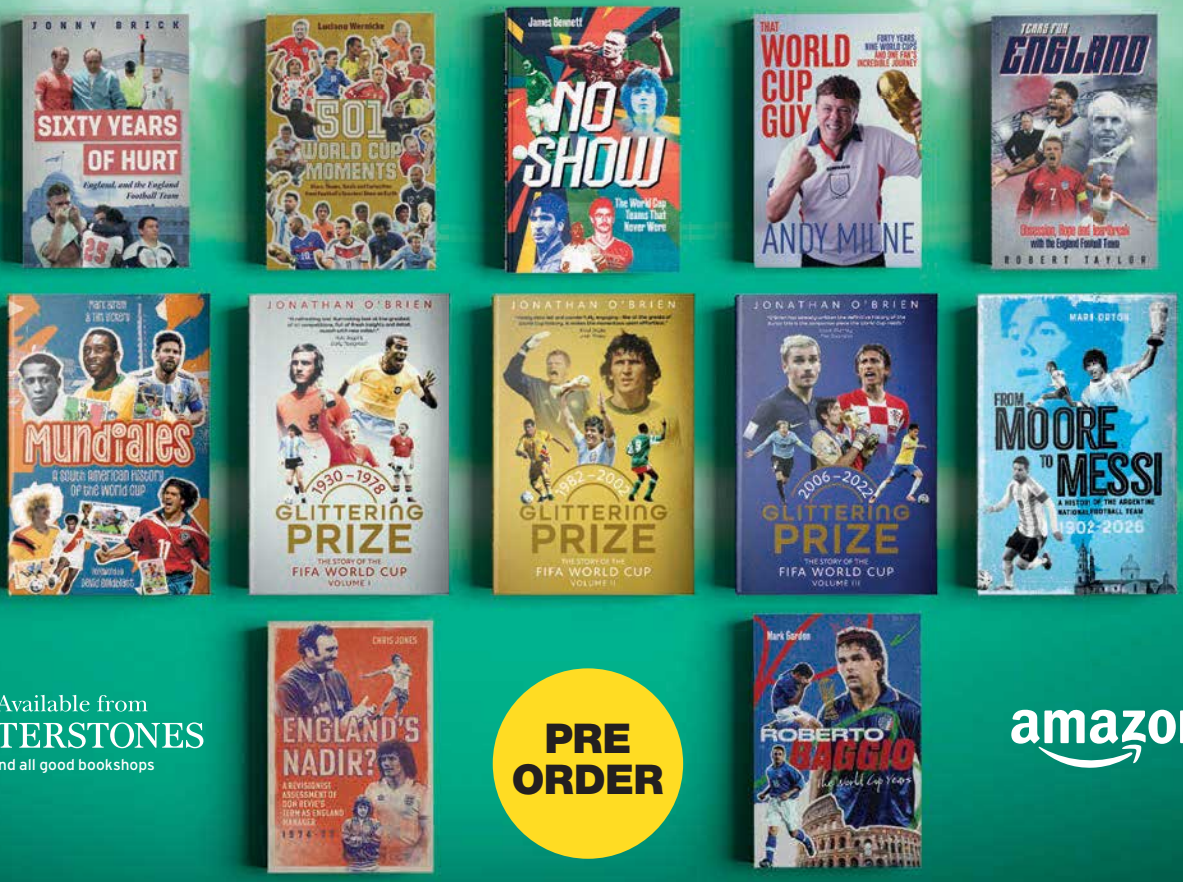

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